

PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATORS TOWARDS
THE ARTS IN SCHOOL CURRICULUM

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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DEBORAH A. CANTWELL



PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATORS
TOWARDS THE ARTS IN SCHOOL CURRICULUM

By

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Abstract

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has recently outlined and begun to implement its comprehensive plan for revision and restructuring of the educational system in this province. The Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Delivery of Programs and Services in Primary, Elementary, Secondary Education (1992), has placed the school curriculum at the very focus of this process. One of the needs identified by the Commission was a balanced and relevant curriculum. In setting direction for revisions to the present system, however, this comprehensive and important document, makes only cursory reference to the arts subjects. Of the two hundred and eleven recommendations made by the Commission, none make mention of the arts. This study examined the perceptions of educators towards the arts in school curriculum. The intention of this research was to set the stage, at this crucial time of change in our educational system, for a more comprehensive understanding of the role and place of arts subjects in the total education of students.

The initial stage of the research involved a critical examination of the most pertinent educational documents and review of relevant literature. The researcher then interviewed a cross-section of educators from all levels of the

system in this province. The nine participants discussed a list of eight open-ended questions which were designed to provide information about the perceptions of these educators towards the role of arts in school curriculum.

One of the most significant findings in the study was the broad agreement that the arts subjects have an essential role to play in the overall education of students. Furthermore, the participants perceived the arts to be an essential component in providing quality education for students at all levels of the system. It would appear that the arts are perceived by educators as nurturing the very characteristics that have been identified by the recent Royal Commission, as well as by other educational reports, as essential to the future success of students.

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Finally, I would like to dedicate this document to my grandparents, the late James B. Cantwell and Bride Cantwell, who greatly influenced my early involvement in music and the arts.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Educational System Undergoing Major Changes

The educational system of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador is presently undergoing a complete restructuring, the stated goal of which is the substantial improvement of the quality of education provided to our students. The Royal Commission on Education, appointed in August 1990 by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, found that:

Despite the significant gains made in education over the past two decades ... there remains throughout the province a widespread and well-founded concern about the quality and direction of schooling. Declining enrolments, demands for access to governance ... pressures to increase achievement levels, and decreasing financial resources have created demands for change which cannot be ignored. (Our Children Our Future: Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Delivery of Programs and Services in Primary, Elementary, Secondary Education, p.xv).

Furthermore, the Commission "rejected the proposition that fine-tuning the existing system could adequately address the problems confronting it" (p. xvi).

One of the major focuses of proposed change to the present system is school curriculum. The impact of the government's plan for restructuring is already being felt. Curriculum program offerings in some schools, particularly in the rural areas of the Province, have already been reduced. Effective September 1994, reductions in the program offerings of schools include such subject areas as music, home economics and industrial arts.

Bayview Heights Academy in Gambo has had to cancel Music, Home Economics and Industrial Arts... and its primary grades will have more than thirty students, up from approximately twenty students in 1993-1994. Smallwood Academy has had to cancel Music for all students. Bonne Bay Academy in Woody Point has had to reduce its three Science programs... [while] multi-grades will occur in all grades from Kindergarten to Grade 6 and there will be increased class sizes. Evening Telegram, May 21, 1994.

As the Government points out in the opening statements of its plan for the restructuring of the system, Adjusting the Course II, students are at the very centre of any educational plan.

There is little doubt that all those responsible for the education of our students sincerely want the system to provide the best possible service to students. Whatever the specific areas of debate... educators, parents, and the public at large clearly want our students to have the highest quality education possible... (p.6).

However, while Government's primary goal is to elevate the achievement levels of our students, it also wants to save considerable money from the system. These two objectives have been described as incompatible. In its analysis of the complete text of "Adjusting the Course II", the Newfoundland Teachers Association makes the following statements:

The approach to achieving the goals also raises a couple of significant concerns which must be addressed. There would appear to be a considerable increase in the emphasis placed on "core" subjects. This will, no doubt, be accompanied by a growing de-emphasis on the humanities and subject areas such as fine arts, physical education, etc. (p.3).

Students in other parts of Canada do not do better than those in Newfoundland and Labrador because their curriculum has concentrated on a few core areas. One of the reasons they perform better is that they have access to a broad and diversified curriculum... (p.18).

It would seem reasonable to ask whether the goal of "quality" education, or "quality" programs might best be served by such deletions or reductions to the curriculum. Furthermore, is there any evidence that educators in Newfoundland and Labrador perceive some aspects of the school curriculum, namely music and other arts subjects, as dispensable or non-essential to quality education? If so, on what grounds can this view be substantiated? What are the existing perceptions of the role and value of art

subjects such as music, art, and drama in the school curriculum? How do educators view the elimination and or reduction of music and other subjects as having impact on the quality of education in this province?

The Government's Plan for "Adjusting the Course"

As alluded to earlier, in November 1993, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador issued the document entitled Adjusting the Course. Outlined in this document is a comprehensive plan for the restructuring and streamlining of the total educational system in the Province. The proposed restructuring includes substantive changes designed to

... bring about a substantial improvement in the quality of education provided to students, and to increase our current low student achievement to a level which ranks with the best in Canada (p.1).

One of the highlights of the proposal for change to the present system includes a restructuring of school curriculum based upon the development of a provincial foundation curriculum. This foundation curriculum will consist of:

... primary core areas (language, mathematics, and science) to be taught to all students at all levels, secondary core areas (second language, social studies, music, fine arts, and physical education) to be taught at specific areas, and non-core areas to be taught at the discretion of the school (p.1).

The reforms proposed in *Adjusting the Course* follow from the report of the Royal Commission on Education submitted to the Government in 1992. The Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Delivery of Programs and Services in Primary, Elementary, Secondary Education, *Our Children Our Future*, points to:

... profound political, social and economic changes... prompting educators everywhere to reassess the effectiveness and efficiency of their education systems [and to] ... a widely held and documented belief that educational standards are too low, and that too many graduates lack the basic and relevant skills required to function in our present society, let alone the modern, global marketplace... (p.xv).

Together, these reports are intended to set the stage for major changes in the curriculum of schools, changes designed to promote the notion of quality in the total educational system of the Province.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In the context of financial restraint and the prevailing economic conditions which face the Province, streamlining and reassessment of programs are, as consequence, accompanied by a demand for a more "basic" curriculum. That is, a curriculum which can be described as one in which any program considered a luxury rather than a necessity is subject to deletion or reduction; a curriculum in which subjects traditionally considered "core" areas such as mathematics and science are given priority over other subjects which may be deemed lesser in importance. These kinds of decisions may have profound implications for the delivery system of education in Newfoundland and Labrador, for the future design and implementation of curriculum in schools, and for the place and role of the arts in the education of students. One may well ask "How will such decisions impact the "quality" of education in this Province?"

In order to gain an understanding of these issues, this study examines the perceptions of a cross-section of educators in relation to the place or role of the arts in school curriculum. While this education may encompass many areas including creative writing and dance, for the purposes of this study the

focus will be mainly upon the traditional arts: music, drama and visual arts education.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The notion of "quality" education is often invoked by those who propose change in education. What "quality" education really means is a troublesome question, but one which has often been posed. Arts subjects such as music and visual art have long been a component of curriculum in this Province based upon the premise that they have something of value to contribute to the education of children. What may the arts contribute to the quality of education, to curriculum balance and to the education of students? Does there exist among educators and curriculum policy-makers any basic perception or conception of the role that the arts may or may not play in the total curriculum of schools? If so, what are these existing perceptions? This study will attempt to provide some valuable insight into the perceptions of educators with regard to these issues.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The Government of our Province has recently outlined, and begun to implement, its comprehensive plan to promote quality education. This is a time of substantial change and readjustment in our total educational system.

In the words of the recent Royal Commission (1992):

... there must be serious efforts to address the quality and future of schooling in the province. We must and can work together to build an education system which our children and province need and deserve. Nothing else will do for our children, our future (Summary Report, p.22).

Have the arts been meaningfully addressed in the Commission's Report? Certainly, there can be found only scant mention of the arts subjects throughout the Report. Are we to assume that music, art, drama and other arts are not to be considered as valid components in providing and achieving "quality" education for our students? Is this the perspective of educators in our Province? Are the arts perceived as relevant by current educators within our schools? These issues may prove relevant to the future design and direction of school curriculum and programming.

The stage has been set for changes that will affect the future direction of education in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. With quality education as its major premise, the Royal Commission has made sweeping

recommendations for change to the present system. One of the needs identified by the Commission is a balanced and relevant curriculum. The matter of what constitutes such a curriculum is a complex issue, and a difficult one to resolve.

This study attempts to explore a particular group of subjects in the present school curriculum, one which has perhaps been treated more marginally than others in the Commission's recommendations for change. The study will generate an awareness and understanding of the perceptions of educators regarding the arts in school curriculum.

If education in our Province is to reach the high level of quality to which all participants aspire - parents, government officials and educators alike, program leadership in all areas of curriculum is essential. Ultimately, the study will serve to inform and direct those who may be involved in curriculum decision-making and educational leadership.

IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM

Historical Overview

Throughout the decade of the 1980s much effort was invested in improving the content and quality of arts education programs in the schools

of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. A document entitled *Comin' to Our Senses: The Report of the Newfoundland and Labrador Task Force on the Arts in Education* (1980) represented the first comprehensive attempt in this province to describe the status of the arts in the curriculum of our schools and to recommend a course of action for a more promising future for the arts in school curriculum.

The document, created under the auspices of the Canadian Conference of the Arts, National Inquiry into Arts and Education, was a concerted attempt to gather information on the arts in education in Newfoundland and Labrador. The final Report was the product of a year of inquiry undertaken by educators in all disciplines and at all levels of the system. The Report described the situation in arts education and made recommendations for the future of arts in school curriculum.

The Report of the Arts Task Force *Comin' To Our Senses* referred to the fact that arts education had been listed by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (1976), as one of the five most urgent problems in Canadian education as a whole. Furthermore, the OECD had described Canadian policy towards the arts in education as one of "benign neglect" (p.ii). The Report pointed to a number of circumstances which may have contributed to what it also described as a situation of neglect of the arts

in the education system in Newfoundland and Labrador. In suggesting reasons why the arts had been given only token support in schools, Comin' to Our Senses pointed to the effects of massive reorganization of schools following Confederation; policy and financial priorities which centred around more pressing issues such as school construction and staffing; lack of teacher training and experience in the arts; limited opportunity for teacher inservice; and limited opportunities and resources for rural schools.

The Report of the Arts Task Force was a timely one. It followed closely upon the heels of the work of a Task Force on Education which, commissioned by the Newfoundland Government, was completed in 1979. Its task was to examine the educational system in our Province in light of declining school enrolments. The Final Report of the Task Force on Education, entitled *Improving the Quality of Education: Challenge and Opportunity* was formally submitted to the Government of our Province in April of 1979.

The Arts Task Force of 1980, while commending the Education Task Force for its sincere effort to identify problems within the school system and recommend solutions, criticized what it characterized as inadequate treatment of and lack of direction in the arts:

... it is unfortunate, though not surprising, that the realm of arts education received a cursory treatment. It is ... evidence of the strong intellectual bias of formal educators that the Task Force on Education provides only token support for "Aesthetic Studies" which were neither clearly defined nor consistently supported... The Task Force as a whole seems to lead to a further entrenchment of the arts in the formally structured school environment... (p.9).

The Arts Task Force pointed out that in Challenge and Opportunity music was described as the most established and accepted discipline in the system and recommended that such studies should be "core" from Kindergarten to grade nine. The Report neglected, however, to address how such a core should be implemented.

The Arts Task Force concluded that while the explicitly stated focus of the Education Task Force was quality and improvement of school programs, arts programs were afforded only marginal treatment. The Report of the Arts Task Force voiced strong concern for the future of arts in the curriculum and stated emphatically that until such courses received recognition from the ministerial level down, there seemed little likelihood that these subjects would gain "respectability" in school curriculum.

In summary, while the Arts Task Force of 1980 found much evidence of a great deal of progressive revision and change in the findings of the Task Force on Education, there was no evidence of any major understanding or concern with arts in education (p.25).

In 1980, the authors of *The Report of the Newfoundland and Labrador Task Force on the Arts in Education*, Hall and Goodridge, envisioned the arts as holding "a proud and influential place" in our education system (p.58). The Report called for a serious commitment by the provincial government and by educational policy-makers to give meaningful exposure to the arts in school curriculum. Now, more than a decade later, *Our Children Our Future: Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Delivery of Programs and Services in Primary, Elementary, Secondary Education* (1992), provides the cornerstone for educational change. The Report, a comprehensive and in-depth study of education in Newfoundland, makes only brief and cursory reference to the arts.

STATING THE PROBLEM

What is the Role of Arts in Curriculum?

Questions such as the following arise from the preceding discussion. In what respect, if any, may the arts be considered an integral part of school curriculum? What do the arts have to offer to the education of the individual? Is quality education possible without such components as music, art, drama, great literature, poetry? In order to answer these questions

intelligently, one must formulate a concept of the arts and the role played by the arts in education.

Today's society places a high value on the kind of knowledge and skills that will promise a successful career. Fran Fearnley, Editor-in-Chief of Today's Parent recently referred to the escalating debate over the state of Canada's schools which she described as "... rife with fundamental disagreements over what constitutes a good education and how to achieve it...".

The question "What can I do to ensure that my child gets a good education?" is heavily loaded. Parents know that their children's future well-being, health, happiness and educational successes are all inextricably interlinked. The stakes couldn't be any higher. (Supplement to Maclean's Magazine Aug. 1993, (p.3).

Fearnley suggests that at the core of the current dispute in education are the champions of child-centred or whole language learning in a face-off with the back-to-basics movement. The decade of the 1980s saw sweeping changes in the classroom with the advance of child-centred education. Now, a decade later, Today's Parent Education Report states that parents are reacting because their children are having difficulty with reading and writing.

At a time when economic and technological change more than ever creates demand for highly literate young people, too many parents find their children can't spell or understand rules of grammar. Just when a generation of boomers focuses like never before on their children's development, schools can't seem to

deliver on their promises.... Beyond the invective, a couple of clear lessons emerge in the complex landscape of learning. It is far easier to change educational philosophies than to manage the practical transitions that must follow in classrooms (p.4).

Clearly, the acquisition of these kinds of basic skills is the mandate of schools. Economic viability is and will continue to be a factor that influences the procedure and content of school curriculum. We have evidence of this kind of influence in our own Province in the recent recommendations of the Task Force on Mathematics and Science Education (1989). There are, however, other valid concerns expressed by educators which may deserve our consideration.

Just as children will grow up to become productive members of society, they also must learn to live with others in an ordered society. What consequence does this have for the importance or value of the social sciences or for moral education in the school curriculum? Children must also learn to make productive use of the time spent away from work - leisure time. How valuable may the arts curriculum be in this respect? To live to the fullest and best, children should enjoy physical and mental health. How may school curriculum best serve these important aspects of life? An appreciation of the value of personal relationships is an important dimension to the child's life - both in the present and for the future. How important is the kind of knowledge or "knowing" that results from family life and sexual education in

helping students to appreciate and better understand their unique place in the world? Clearly, the question of "value" is ubiquitous in the process of curriculum decision-making.

Curriculum - An Important Tool

Just recently we have been alerted to the direct influence of school curriculum upon our children. The Report of the Royal Commission (1992) identifies the school curriculum as the component of education which "affects students most directly" (p.295). The reinforcement of social values, preparation for life in society, and critical awareness of heritage, traditions and environment are stated as being advanced by school curriculum.

It is through curriculum that schools impart the knowledge and skills which are viewed as valuable and important. According to Hirst (1965) knowledge can be categorized based on distinct kinds of meaning and validation procedures. Hirst describes these categories and discusses particular concepts which validate each as a unique and valuable area of knowledge. These categories include mathematics, sciences, history, the arts, ethics, and religion - all meriting a place in the curriculum because of the unique elements they possess. Hirst contends that through a combination of all of these, students find their own individual place in the world. With

particular reference to the arts in curriculum, Hirst describes the uniqueness of the arts as ranging beyond the familiar, as giving the senses new ranges of application. It may be interesting to note that Hirst comments upon the danger of placing too great an emphasis upon the traditional academic components of curriculum. He suggests that to emphasize mathematics and the sciences to the exclusion of other subjects narrows the goals of learning and may well result in the exclusion of important subject matter from the curriculum.

The Arts: Uncertain Fate?

In a column written in the *Toronto Globe and Mail* January 1994, Bronwyn Drainie discusses the fluctuating fate of arts education in Canada:

When it comes to arts education in this country, the mixed signals are endlessly perplexing. On the one hand, the arts are put on display as one of the major accomplishments of our schools... On the other hand things are awfully grim. On the positive side... the Ministry of Education [Ontario] came out with a new Common Curriculum for grades 1 to 9 last year in which four "core areas" of study are designated: Language, The Arts, Self and Society, and Math, Science and Technology. On the negative side, British Columbia promoted the arts to the same key position in its education system ... but only on paper.

Drainie points out that while recognition is an enormous step forward for the arts, it is but an empty gesture without the resources and funding to support

it. She also attempts to explain why the mixed signals are particularly frustrating:

... because international research into arts education continues to show that it provides exactly the kind of stimulation and skills that schools in Canada say they want to give their students: flexibility, problem-solving, creativity, team-work and individuality. (Globe and Mail, January 22, 1994).

Summary

As previously stated, the entire educational system of Newfoundland and Labrador is presently under revision. The premise of this complete restructuring is substantial improvement of the quality of education available to the students who attend our schools. One of the major focuses of this restructuring will be school curriculum. Current educational reports designed to initiate and guide this process of restructuring, however, have left many questions unanswered as to the future role of arts subjects in the curriculum.

In view of the issues discussed in this chapter, certain questions arise. What is the future of arts in education? Do the arts have a relevant role to play in the education of students? What are the perceptions of present educators regarding the role played by the arts in our current school curriculum? This study will attempt to move towards a better understanding of these issues and to provide some possible answers to these questions.

The following chapter will examine some of the most pertinent educational reports and current literature dealing with the role of arts in education.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter touches upon some of the most pertinent issues in documents and current literature dealing with arts in education generally, and the role of arts in school curriculum.

Aims of Education: Philosophical Considerations

The formulation of aims of education has long been a ubiquitous component in the process of schooling. Educators, from at least the time of Plato's Republic to the present day, have discussed and formulated desirable goals for education systems, goals which serve as a philosophical basis for the education of students. In the 4th Century B.C., Plato wrote of an educational philosophy which espoused the notion that education should promote the good society, the good life, the good person. How were these objectives to be met? They were to be achieved through the vehicle of school curriculum.

In Canada, individual provinces have the authority to determine goals within their own educational systems. In this province, as in any other, goals and priorities reflect and serve the society in which we live. Crocker and

Riggs (1979) cite the principles of democracy and individual freedom as the foundation for the "self-evident" and fundamental goal of education:

The fundamental goal of education is to help each person to achieve to his fullest development both as an individual and as a member of society (p.25).

Crocker and Riggs (1979) define "fullest development" as that which encompasses four basic areas of human development:

...the function of education can only be to ensure that the individual is sufficiently developed intellectually, morally, physically, and socially to enable him to make choices in a reasoned manner, with due regard for the rights of others (p.26).

More recently, The Royal Commission (1992) points out that the aims of public education for Newfoundland state that education is a process whose purpose is the "fullest and best development" of the student. Once again, the basic premise is clearly articulated, that the school must attend to the "full development of the whole child - cognitively, physically, morally, spiritually, socially and emotionally" (p.215).

The Aims of Education for Newfoundland

The Aims of Public Education for Newfoundland and Labrador (1984) provides a philosophical basis for school curriculum in our Province. The fundamental premise of the Aims in the development of each student's full potential as a thinking and acting individual. Referring to students as persons of value and worth, the document clearly states the main objective in providing for their education: ... the development of an individual, not the success of a job ... is the primary concern of public education (p.7).

The Aims clearly places the development of the individual's full potential as a human person at the centre of the educational process. It is interesting to note that job success is secondary in importance to the development of the student as an individual human person. This particular notion comes into question, however, in light of the final report of the Task Force on Mathematics and Science (1989) in which job success is posited as priority. Also, the notion of "balance" is invoked by the stated philosophy of The Aims. The document points to the need for provision for both the intellectual and emotional realms in promoting the development of an individual's fullest potential. It suggests that "fullest" development encompasses a balance between the emotional and the intellectual. Clearly, then The Aims of

Education for Newfoundland, lead to the provision in school curriculum for both these perspectives of human learning.

Rationales for Arts Curriculum

Arts: A Survey of Provincial Curricula at the Elementary and Secondary Levels (1983) identifies the commonalities of the arts and provides justification for their inclusion in the curriculum of our schools. The document characterizes the arts as:

- central to the student's experience
- a function of life itself [providing] insight to all other areas of learning
- instrumental in teaching basic skills as well as in furthering individual intellectual development
- a proven valuable aid in an increased positive awareness of self... and sensitivity to others (pp.2-3)

The Program of Studies for Newfoundland and Labrador 1993-1994 makes the following statement with regard to the inclusion of Music in the primary curriculum:

- provides children with enjoyable musical experiences
- fosters a love and understanding of music and sensitivity to it

- establishes a foundation for aesthetic development
- fosters children's confidence in their ability to perform and create music (p.29)

Art at the primary level:

- fosters an appreciation of visual art and the visual environment
- stresses the relation between seeing and feeling
- fosters student confidence
- establishes a foundation for aesthetic development (p.14)

At the elementary level, the Program of Studies is closely in keeping with those principles already outlined with a more pronounced emphasis on growth in three major areas of learning: "the affective, the cognitive, and the psychomotor"(p.61):

- develops cognitive skills through musical literacy and psychomotor skills through movement and performance (p.62)
- fosters an appreciation of the uniqueness of every human being (p.48).

The Role of Arts in Education

Elliot Eisner (1992) believes that prevailing conceptions of the arts are based upon a massive misunderstanding of the role of the arts in human development and education. This misunderstanding, contends Eisner, is rooted in ancient conceptions of mind, knowledge, and intelligence. He points to school curriculum and the scheduling of arts as indicative of the valuing of school subjects:

Make no mistake, the curriculum we prescribe for schools and the time we allocate to subjects show children what adults believe is important for them to learn... This time represents both value and opportunity: value because it indicates what is considered significant; opportunity because the school can be thought of as a culture of opportunity. Schools... are cultures for growing minds, and the direction this growth takes is influenced by the opportunities the school provides. These... are the school's program - its curriculum (Phi Delta Kappan, April 1992, Article #4).

Eisner identifies several widely held but "fundamentally flawed" beliefs about mind, knowledge and intelligence which influence educational priorities. He challenges the validity of the belief that human conceptual thinking requires the use of language; that sensory experience is not essential to intellectual development; that intelligence requires logic; that scientific method is the best and most reliable way to learn about the world. To

summarize briefly, Eisner's argument is that these beliefs create an intellectual climate that marginalizes the arts because "... what these beliefs celebrate seems to have little to do with what the arts provide."

Robinson (1991) would lend credence to the argument posed by Eisner. Robinson describes what is, in his view, the most significant problem:

The real problems facing the arts in schools are ideological; that is they are problems of basic, unquestioned assumptions about education in general and the arts in particular. Where the roles of arts are properly understood resources can be found, however scarce. The fact that too few resources are available for the arts reflects a prior problem of attitudes. (From keynote address The Artsworld Conference, Toronto 1991).

Is there evidence of such an intellectual climate as that proposed by Eisner and Robinson in the schools of Newfoundland and Labrador? Does there exist among our educators a basic misunderstanding of the role that the arts may or may not play in the total school curriculum? Are there various issues that decision-makers and policy-makers need to be aware of in their deliberations regarding curriculum design and implementation?

One writer (Ross 1984) argues that the arts have long been formally recognized as playing an important role in the development of children, but that despite this recognition, have been and continue to be viewed as a peripheral or less important component of school curriculum. One factor

relating to the marginalization of arts subjects suggests Harris (1992) is administrators' attitudes concerning the value of arts.

Harris contends that the fundamental problem has to do with not the absolute importance of these subjects, but their relative importance. The question inevitably becomes not "Is music important?" but rather "How important is music in relation to all the other demands being made upon the curriculum and upon the school?" In this context, a subject area is assigned a place in the curriculum based upon its perceived value. Harris points to the issue of what criteria will serve as a basis for these decisions as a crucial element.

Some studies have shown that general arts education, that is arts education for all students, has been viewed by students and by the public as a less important priority of curriculum. In one study (1988), students asked to rate the relative importance of art courses in schools ranked art courses to be lower in importance compared to other courses (Arts Education in Canada: An Exploratory Study, 1988). Music and Art ranked 16th and 17th, below Religion at 15th in a list of 18 courses in grades 7-12. Math, English, and Computer Studies were ranked as the top three in perceived importance. Such views are, as reported by a Gallop Survey cited in this Canada Council Study, not limited to students. In a 1984 poll which asked members of the

public to rate a list of 11 subjects, Art and Music were 10th and 11th in terms of perceived importance, while under 20% of respondents said that students should be required to take courses in Music and Art (p.7).

Ross (1984) has documented the peripheral status of the arts in education. He has shown that:

...every major educational report of the last fifty years or so has given the fullest moral support to the role of the arts in education and yet, despite such widespread official endorsement, the arts have continued to be widely regarded and resourced as an educational frill (p.1).

Ross points to "strong materialist and politically reactionary forces" at work in the education. He speaks specifically of the "back to basics" trend - the view that children should be taught the so-called basic skills necessary to getting a job and contributing to economic growth. Ross points out that while most schools acknowledge the social, personal and moral needs of children, the traditional curriculum has always been committed to teaching children to be useful and effective in the world. What this means, in Ross's view, is that the school's prime task has been to ensure that children will learn - and also demonstrate that they have learned skills and knowledge of practical value. Ross suggests that because the arts are perceived as less practical there has been a lack of enthusiasm for the arts of the policy-making

level. He further suggests that this perception is central to the debate on the balance and efficiency of the school curriculum. Ross proposes that the arts are viewed as "...at odds with the mundane, secular, pragmatic concerns of everyday ..." and consequently have been assigned peripheral status. He suggests that the arts are perceived as

... odd, unsafe, frivolous, threatening, wasteful, disruptive: all those things that are at odds with the business of sensibly getting on with making a living ... maintaining the status quo (p.7).

The issues articulated by Eisner, Harris and Ross give rise to certain questions which may prove significant to the problem under discussion. Are the arts, by the very nature of their link with the creative, the expressive, the imaginative, perceived as impractical by educators and administrators and students in this Province? Or, can the arts, because of their uniqueness and difference, promote a "way of knowing" in their own right, as Ross contends, offering unique access to certain dimensions of human experience?

Educational Reports and Arts Programs

"Challenge and Opportunity"

The final Report of the 1979 Task Force on education in Newfoundland and Labrador was entitled Improving the Quality of Education: Challenge and Opportunity. With declining school enrolments in view, The Task Force had clearly defined its mandate as "nothing less than a complete re-examination of the educational system of the Province" (p.1).

The primary focus of the investigations of The 1979 Education Task Force was school programs. This Task Force, targeting the study of school programming as "the most significant aspect of our work" (p.98) gave the following rationale:

Although it may appear to be one step removed from the visible issues of teacher job losses, revenue reductions, school closures and the like that surround declining enrolments, it was felt that these issues were in themselves peripheral to the central question underlying educational quality, that of the nature of the school experience to which pupils are exposed (p.3).

According to the Final Report of the Task Force on Education, many representations made to the Task Force spoke to the problem of the limited programs offered to students in many of the Province's schools. In particular,

the offering of basic programs was described as a "serious limitation of schools. Lack of music, art and other programs were cited as problems at the elementary level. Similarly, lack of programs for "non-academically inclined pupils" was a concern expressed by high schools (p.191).

It is interesting to note that as a basis for its proposal for the design of programs in primary and elementary schools, the Task Force returned to the Aims of Education in recommending general objectives. The Report stressed the need for schools to accept the responsibility for developing "maximum potential of all persons" and to place a "broad interpretation on the meaning of intellectual development" (p.108). Furthermore, the findings and recommendations of Challenge and Opportunity created impetus for the creation of new and improved school programs. In particular, music curriculum took a new and innovative direction with the introduction in 1983 of a literacy-based program. This Task Force espoused the notion that if music and art are basic disciplines, then the school has the responsibility to make provision for these subjects. Recommendation 6.9 of the Final Report called for the development of tests for certain subject areas: "...in social studies, music, physical fitness, religion and other areas not currently assessed."

"Towards an Achieving Society"

In May of 1989, the Task Force on Mathematics and Science Education submitted to the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador a report entitled "Towards an Achieving Society". The statements and recommendations of this report targeted the content, implementation and direction of school curriculum.

One of the main thrusts of this Report suggested that certain subjects in the school curriculum are inherently more valuable than others. The first stated principle of the Report deals with the priority of certain school subjects, namely mathematics and science. These subjects are assigned a place of high importance in curriculum based upon the substantial demand for math and science related backgrounds in the workplace. The Report further suggested that the teaching of math and science is a unique domain of schooling, while some other areas could conceivably be handled by other institutions of society:

Not all school subjects are of equal value. Schools should assign their highest priority to teaching the basic academic subjects which they are best equipped to handle, and which are not part of the mandate of other institutions of society. Mathematics and science must be included among the areas of highest priority (p.42).

Expressing high concern for what it describes as a "crisis of low expectations", the Crocker Report argued that the school curriculum must emphasize mathematics and science in order to develop students' analytical, linear thinking skills. Furthermore, the Report marginalized other programs which it described as restricting students' opportunities to develop these kinds of high priority skills:

Rather than keeping students in school through use of programs which restrict their opportunities, the aim should be to provide the means... for [success] in the core academic areas (p.8).

Towards an Achieving Society proposed a curriculum with sharp focus upon intellectual process, and the development of cognitive skills. Its conclusions and recommendations pointed to a school curriculum with a major focus upon mathematics and science, with the exclusion of other programs a considered option.

"Our Children Our Future"

Our Children Our Future: Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Delivery of Programs and Services in Primary, Elementary, Secondary Education (1992) points to the important principles of equity, quality, and freedom as guiding standards in educational decision-making. Equity calls for

"every child's full participation and involvement" while "providing adequate choices that meet diverse learning needs and interests" by "ensuring that the curriculum is current, relevant and meaningful...(p.205). Our Children Our Future states that any model for change in the educational system must be founded on the real needs of children and that quality must permeate all levels of the system. With these fundamental principles of equality and quality firmly in sight the Royal Commission (1992) concludes that:

All children are entitled to a curriculum rich and varied, challenging and inspiring, which enables them to reach the highest possible level of fulfilment...

The arts or their role in school curriculum is not addressed in any of the two hundred and eleven recommendations made by the Commission. Chapter 14 of Our Children Our Future, dealing with curriculum, mentions such terms as "high quality academic education", "broad academic curriculum" and "academic" and "non-academic courses". Nowhere in the Report, however, are these terms defined. Interestingly, the Report states:

...a core curriculum must be established based upon the disciplines of Language, Mathematics and Science ... other courses should continue to be mandatory. Even in small rural schools students should have an opportunity to experience a broad academic curriculum. (Our Children Our Future: Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Delivery of Programs and Services in Primary, Elementary, Secondary Education, p.300).

What then, is high quality academic education? What is broad academic curriculum? What constitutes an academic or non-academic course? Where do the arts fit in school curriculum? What is their role? These important questions are left unanswered in *Our Children Our Future*.

"Building a Strong Foundation for the Future"

In a recent report, *Building A Strong Foundation For The Future: Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Kindergarten* (1992), the Department of Education presents a philosophy in which three "key" components are highlighted: child-centred education, individualization, and child participation in the learning process. The Report states:

...the overall goal is to provide opportunities for children to become independent thinkers and problem solvers who find joy and satisfaction in the learning process. To achieve this goal, the "whole child" must be nurtured in a challenging, child-centred environment... Our challenge, as educators, is to arrive at this goal by honouring its underlying philosophy in action as well as in word (p.5).

The Report uses what it refers to as a "broader definition" of curriculum as a "reference point for all deliberations" in its task at hand (p.7). It is the stated conclusion of the Report that "all three perspectives (process, content, and product) have a valuable contribution to make" and that the child is

ultimately the prime consideration in all curriculum decision-making. Some of the statements which summarize the proposed curriculum framework in A View Of Learning are, interestingly, reminiscent of the philosophy expressed in the Aims of Education for Newfoundland:

- The child is at the centre of learning
- Each child is an individual
- The child actively engages in many different learning processes as s/he interacts with meaningful content
- The desired outcome of learning (product) is personal growth and development resulting from the acquisition of attitudes and dispositions, knowledge and understanding, and skills and strategies. (p.8)

One of the recommendations made in Building a Strong Foundation for the Future was that the Division of Program Development extend this holistic and child-centered philosophy to other primary levels 1-3. It was also recommended that this philosophy be further extended to include the elementary grades 4-6 (p.18, recommendations 18 and 20).

The Arts and Curriculum Balance

The Arts in Education: A Conference on Balanced Curriculum and Student Retention (March 1993) attempted to address what has been

described as "erosion of arts curriculum in Newfoundland schools". While stating agreement with the educational importance of math, science, technology and entrepreneurship as part of the educational agenda set by the recent Royal Commission on Education (1992), the stated goal of this conference was "to promote an educational system that develops the full variety of children's abilities" (p.1).

The organizers of the conference, a Gander School Board music consultant, Peter Gamwell, and an arts consultant at the Department of Education, Alex Hickey, express a particular view of the school curriculum. They see the curriculum from the vantage point of a holistic philosophy, as encompassing a very broad range of experiences and providing for all aspects of learning. Such a holistic approach to human learning is by its very nature, a commitment to what may be described as a balanced curriculum.

Much has been written in the literature of education concerning the notion of curriculum balance. Dearden (1984) considers the merits of balance and coherence as fundamental curricular principles. He discusses the notion of 'balance', alerting us to its problematic and controversial nature. He argues that balance is a matter of judgement as to how much of each element must be present in order for balance to be achieved. He also asks a poignant

question: How are we to recognize whether or not a proper balance has been achieved?

Given the instruction to create a balanced curriculum, relates Dearden, exactly the same provision could be viewed as either balanced or unbalanced - depending upon what is judged and who is judging. He argues that appeals to balance are often closely connected with justice, or in other words, giving what is due.

Lawton (1987) points to curriculum balance as the key to effective schooling. In his interpretation, balance in curriculum places the primary focus upon skill development and application, and gives prominence to personal development. With respect to the question of what is 'basic', writes Lawton, all of these components are considered basic.

Eisner refers to the prevailing climate of today's schools in *The Art of Educational Evaluation* (1985) as one which "places a very great emphasis on measured forms of educational performance, but tends to neglect attention to the performer himself...". In Eisner's view, school curriculum makes little provision for the development of "forms of thought that lie outside of a narrow view of literacy" (p.165). Eisner refers to what he calls a demise of balanced curriculum amidst demands for a return to a "back to basics"

approach. He contends that this approach is not particularly appropriate for today's educational world.

Eisner cites one of the most important variables influencing what students learn in schools is what students are given the opportunity to learn. He suggests that what is included in the agenda of schools - that is which subjects are to be taught, are of paramount importance. Eisner points out that decisions about what is to be included and excluded from school curriculum have profound implications not only with respect to the opportunities afforded to students but also influences what students will regard as important or valuable in school.

One of the indicators of how school curriculum is valued, writes Eisner, is the amount of instructional time devoted to individual subjects within the curriculum. For example, subjects considered to be "core" curriculum such as math, science and language arts consume 60-70% of scheduled time while arts subjects such as music or art take up 4-5% of the scheduled time (per week) at the elementary level. Consequently, students actually spend more time at recess than is devoted to studying subjects such as art or music. Taken a step further, says Eisner, we may consider the significance of the placement of subjects in terms of the school day. Those subjects viewed as most valuable are often scheduled in the morning at a time when students are

considered to be more alert and "fresh" - when they must "think" and are able to gain the most from instruction. Eisner points to the significance of time and location of time with respect to children's opportunities to learn:

In the simplest terms, it is not possible to have any semblance of curriculum balance whatsoever if the content areas needed for such balance are absent from the curriculum or given so little time that their effectiveness is neutralized. If one of the most significant factors influencing learning is the opportunity to learn, then the lack of opportunity to deal with particular content fields vitiates the child's opportunity to learn what those fields have to provide (p.123).

Arts and Cognition

Eisner (1985) argues that the arts are cognitive activities, guided by human intelligence that make unique forms of meaning possible. He suggests that there presently exists within schools a view of the arts that will entail "disasterous consequences" for education. He speaks of a perception of the arts as a-rational, as "emotive forms which provide satisfaction but not understanding". Eisner contends that it is this particular view that has led inevitably to the present "dubious status hierarchy" of subjects which has been created in school systems.

Cognition has been defined as "knowledge; to know; 1) the process of knowing or perceiving" (Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary).

Thus cognition is a "way of knowing", a matter of perception in which the functions of the senses are crucial. Eisner argues that no concepts can be formed without the input of the senses, that concepts are not linguistic but sensory. He explains:

It is easy to see how such concepts as dog or chair, red or blue, depend upon sensory information. But what about such abstract concepts as justice... infinity? I would argue that these concepts are nothing more than meaningless noises or marks on paper unless their referents can be imagined. Unless we have a conception of justice, the word is empty... nothing more than a few decibels of sound moving through space (p.203).

Eisner insists that in order for us to make meaning we must first form images - whether these are visual, auditory, or related to some other sensory form, words are meaningless without them. Furthermore, concepts formed through sensory information can then be recalled and manipulated through imagination. This aspect of the cognitive process, writes Eisner, is private. The imagination, however, provides the springboard for expression - that is, the "form of representation" which externalizes thought in order to make known to self and others what has been conceptualized.

Arnheim (1982) explores a concept which he refers to as "visual thinking". He argues that all problem-solving takes place in perceptual imagery, or in other words, visual imagery. Arnheim points out that facts are

meaningless as long as they are observed in isolation but that "productive" thinking involves understanding structure or "relations". Truly perceiving, in Arnheim's view, means grasping relations, how things relate to one another, in what ways they belong together, and in what manner they are unique and separate. He further argues that such questions are the essence for understanding in any field of knowledge, and for any kind of problem-solving. He insists that the arts are the "training ground par excellence" for imagery, for the learning of visual relations.

Traditionally, the notion of "basic education" has denoted a system that focuses high attention on the basic skills of the three Rs - reading, writing and mathematics, and upon the measured performance of the student in these areas. However, there are those who would seriously argue that basic education entails much more than what is suggested by this definition. Adler (1982) writes in *The Paideia Proposal*:

[There] are three basic areas of subject matter indispensable to basic schooling - language, literature, and the fine arts; mathematics and the natural sciences; history, geography, and social studies. Why these three? They comprise the most fundamental branches of learning. No one can claim to be educated who is not reasonably well acquainted with all three.

Adler cites three educational objectives as essential in the process of basic schooling: personal growth, citizenship, and earning a living. Adler

insists that all of these apply to all students without exception. Furthermore, he insists that to fail to provide for these in school curriculum is a violation of basic democratic principles. Referring to such failure as "abominable discrimination" (p.12) and criticizing any system which would offer different goals for different groups of children, Adler calls for education that is both "liberal and general" (p.19).

Broudy (as cited in Smith and Simpson, eds. 1991) refers to what he describes as the "cavalier attitude" of some educational philosophers who view arts experiences as a "desirable nonessential" of curriculum. Broudy provides justification for arts in school curriculum by exploring the question of how we may consider the arts to be basic to the curriculum. Broudy suggests that arts education is basic in a foundational sense in that it influences perception and understanding of life with its various roles and rituals, with its infinite possibilities; that the arts, fundamental in the cultivation of the imagination, are an important aspect of learning.

Elliot (as cited in Smith and Simpson, eds. 1991) discusses the notion of imagination and creativity as important components of learning. He speaks of two concepts of creativity which he refers to as the traditional and the new. He points out that while normal science is not regarded as creative, revolutionary scientists such as Newton, Darwin, and Einstein are regarded as

creative to an exceptionally high degree. These scientists, through great insight and exceptional creativity restructured the world. Elliot argues that the traditional concept of creativity has been to think of "creation", in connection with the work, for example, of actors, artists, film producers, and fashion designers who produce objects for admiration rather than for practical use. Traditionally, asserts Elliot, the perception of creativity rests with the concept of "artist" rather than scholar or scientist.

A new concept of creativity, in Elliot's view, has come into prominence in the first two decades after World War II. This was a time when space and nuclear research provided countless theoretical and technical problems which demanded creative and imaginative solutions. Elliot cites two main versions of the new concept which are closely related: if a problem is defined as a situation in which no adequate response is available in terms of existing knowledge, then creativity is the means by which the problem is to be solved; creativity is identified with producing novel ideas and the solutions which grow out of them. This concept of creativity, suggests Elliot, embodies the notion that all creativity is creative thinking (pp. 61-66).

In expounding a theory of multiple intelligences, Gardner (1983), argues that the arts are a unique "way of knowing". In his book, *Frames of Mind*, Gardner provides an argument for the existence of what he refers to

as "multiple human intelligences". He proposes that there exists a number of autonomous intellectual competencies which include namely: linguistic intelligence, musical intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, spatial intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, and two other forms which fall into the category of what he calls personal intelligence (p.126). Gardner portrays the arts as a matter of mind, as mental activities involving the use of symbol systems. He suggests that artistic perception and production are central to human cognition.

The Arts and Culture

According to Langer (1958) every culture develops art as surely as it develops language. Imagination, in her view, is "the common source of dream, reason, religion, and all true observation". Langer contends that art presents "intangible forms" to the imagination.

She posits that learning in the arts is a unique order of experience which provides symbol systems that are as crucial to the child's development as those of the verbal or the mathematical; that students learn, through the study of music and art, to understand, use and create new symbol systems. Langer describes the arts as expressive of not actual, but virtual space, time, movement and life; as symbolic expression of feeling; as education of the

emotions and perceptions. Langer argues that the arts are a unique "way of knowing" about the world. She claims that such knowledge is essential to the quality of individuals produced by society.

Rose (1990) writes that culture is the expression of human consciousness, and that no culture is known to have existed without the arts in some form. She points out that:

Culture is shaped and produced by people. [In effect], people are both receivers and makers of culture. ... The arts, as a lived expression of culture, keep us conscious of our culture and who we are. They help us to locate ourselves within a common cultural heritage ... encourage us to celebrate our diversities ... [they are] a means of ... experiencing a common language and a common expression.

Rose depicts the arts as providing opportunities for social and cultural interaction, formation of cultural identity, and for the ongoing production of culture. One of the goals of arts education, posits Rose, is to foster participation in "art and culture in-the-making".

Reimer (1989), in his explanation of the purpose for music education in the school, refers to the fulfillment of "societal needs". He writes "... all of us ... are social creatures who need to celebrate the ongoing rituals that help to mold us into a society and many of those rituals are unthinkable without music". Reimer, on the other hand, makes the point that identification with functions of a non-curricular nature may partly account for the existence of

a negative view of music programs - that they are not essential in terms of basic curriculum.

Reimer (1970) argues, however, that the arts encompass a basic way of knowing about reality:

Why should every person be given the opportunity to understand the nature of mathematics? ... the nature of language?... of physics, of chemistry, of geography, of history? Because all of these are basic ways for human beings to understand the nature of the real. ... those concerned with the arts in education can ask the same question and give the same answer. ... the value of music education [may be considered as] at the same level as the value of all important education... (p.9)

Another aspect of social growth is discussed by Harris (1986). She refers to the development of the student's sense of social responsibility through music education. While she speaks of choral and instrumental performance as "established venues for social and musical cooperation", Harris discusses the then current revision of the total primary curriculum pointing to significant changes in, for example, the expanded role of movement, classroom performances of small groups, and the implementation of folk dance at all levels including Kindergarten. Harris points out that "The newer methods of teaching [music] demand constant social interaction and the corresponding development of social responsibility". Another contribution to social growth

made by the music program, notes Harris, is the emphasis placed on folk culture, "... their own rich heritage of folk song and traditional music".

The Arts in Education

Ken Robinson, a key speaker at The Artsworld Conference, an international conference on arts education held in Toronto in February 1991, as well as at the Conference on Balanced Curriculum and Student Retention held in Gander in March 1993, provided a broad perspective of arts and education in the western world. Robinson posits the existence of three major preoccupations in the public debate about education in Britain over the past decade.

Firstly, Robinson points to the economic recession which has created pressure to reduce spending in education as well as in other areas, and thus a focus on what is considered to be the "essentials". Secondly, Robinson discusses the persistent pressure for schools to concentrate on what is perceived as "basic" skills in education - in mathematics and in literacy. Thirdly, he contends that a persistent public emphasis on science and technology "militates against the effective implementation of a comprehensive arts program and is based on a restrictive view of science, technology and the arts" (p.3).

Robinson points out that these three concerns led to the introduction in 1988 of the Education Reform Act in England and Wales, and to the formulation of the first National Curriculum for schools. The English National Curriculum is based on 10 subjects: 3 core subjects - English, math and science; and 7 foundation subjects - geography, history, technology, a modern foreign language, physical education, art and music. Robinson describes the aims of the National Curriculum:

- to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils;
- to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

Robinson argues that the arts have key roles to play in realizing these aims. His argument, that the arts fulfill a range of complex and related roles in education, can be briefly summarized as having four main propositions. Firstly, he notes that education systems now face unprecedented social and economic challenges and urgently need new forms of curricula. Secondly, he points out that the arts have a major role to play in meeting these new challenges. Thirdly, he posits that provision for the arts in education is "profoundly inadequate". Lastly, Robinson contends that to limit the role of arts in curriculum is counterproductive, both in terms of the arts themselves and in terms of the quality of education provided to students (p.4).

In Robinson's view, some educators view the arts as less important and hence more "dispensable" than other areas of school curriculum. While he admits that some of the difficulties in arts education arise from lack of resources, he argues that this is not the most significant issue. He contends that in school systems where the role of arts is "properly understood" resources can be found and provision for the arts in curriculum is given genuine consideration. Robinson posits that the most significant problem facing the arts in schools is "ideological" - unquestioned assumptions about education in general and the arts in particular".

Arts and Personal Development

The notion that the arts play a positive role in guiding children towards self-knowledge and personal growth is articulated by many writers.

Dobbin recently discussed the issue of personal growth as a "matter of curriculum" in *Prism* (Spring 1994). She argues that education is a process of becoming, a process which she describes as "personal" in that it affects all of the individual's relationships with self, with others and with the world. Dobbin depicts the arts as an essential component in the development of the total human person. She suggests that school curriculum must promote total growth, total wellness, not just excellence in certain subjects.

Gamwell (1991), in a presentation to the Royal Commission on Education, pointed out that we need to work towards a system which gives priority to forms of teaching which develop self-confidence and self-control. One of the most significant problems facing our society today, in Gamwell's view, is the "failure" of students in the education system. He argues that once labelled by the education system as failures, these students lack the ambition and personal confidence that is necessary for future success in life. Gamwell describes the notion that "maximising basic education" in science, mathematics and language will automatically produce the kind of individuals who will succeed and who will "transform our future economy" as simply, a myth.

Unsworth (1990) cites a recent study in California which concluded that lack of self-esteem is one of the major factors in school failures. She depicts the arts as providing an arena for the development of "multiple capacities". Unsworth posits that the arts provide opportunities for students to experience immediate success, to develop personal relationships and to gain confidence in self-expression.

Hanna (1992) makes a case for the connection between arts education to achievement in other disciplines. She discusses the enhancement of self-esteem and the possibilities for learning about the self through dance:

Dance can ... enhance students' self esteem by fostering an appreciation of the body ... by developing kinesthetic joy and lifelong physical fitness, by building a sense of empowerment and integration of mind and body, and by giving students feelings of satisfaction as a result of genuine achievement (p.52).

Lehman (1988) points out that there is no firm conclusion that good arts programs are the cause of high quality in schools, or simply a result of high quality. He does report, however, a positive correlation between a high level of excellence in a school and the implementation of a dynamic arts program and posits that "The breadth and depth of the curriculum in the arts seems certainly to be one valid index of quality in a school system".

Lee (1985) identifies the most common justifications recited by those involved in designing and implementing curriculum for arts programs. It may be interesting to note that the points discussed by Lee are reminiscent of the ideas touched upon by the participants in the study with respect to the role of arts. In particular, the most notable points are listed below:

- The arts can provide a means of helping the student to develop self-awareness and awareness of his or her environment ... [of] inner feelings [and] outward perceptions.
- The arts may enhance learning. ... Skills learned in artistic expression relate to other basic skills (interpreting symbols, coordinating muscles, concentrating on a task).
- The arts can provide added enrichment to the school program.

- The arts can help engender good feelings toward education in general and school in particular.
- The arts give teachers alternative means, through a variety of teaching methods and human and non-human resources, to introduce and reinforce learning.

This list comprises five of the seven points discussed by Lee. It may be worthwhile to mention the other two points in view of the fact that both are mentioned by the interviewees during the course of our discussions: firstly, that the arts provide the student with a means of creativity; and secondly that the arts are a major discipline.

Summary

The themes which have been discussed in this chapter are representative of some of the most current and prominent issues which relate to the role of arts in education. There would appear to be considerable agreement upon at least these points: firstly, the notion that the arts encompass and effectuate a range of complex and related roles; and secondly, the arts have a considerable contribution to make in realizing what has been defined as the primary goal of education - the fullest and best development of the individual as a thinking and acting human being and productive member of society.

The following chapter presents the data collected through personal interviews with nine participants who represent a cross-section of educators at all levels of the school system in Newfoundland. The question of the role of arts in education is further explored through the perceptions of these educators towards the arts in school curriculum.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY AND PRESENTATION OF DATA

Of the two hundred and eleven recommendations made by the recent Royal Commission on Education (1992), forty-four of which pertain directly to curriculum, none make mention of the arts. The position of the Commission concerning the role and future direction of the arts in our school curriculum is unstated.

What then is the future of the arts in the school curriculum of our Province? Are the arts relevant in education? Do these subjects have a valuable contribution to make in the education of our students? This study explores the perceptions of a cross-section of educators towards the arts in curriculum in an attempt to provide some possible answers to these important questions.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

A Qualitative-Phenomenological Approach

The study examines the perceptions of educators with regard to the issue of the role of arts subjects in school curriculum. An ethnographic design is employed as the method of data collection. The research problem is investigated through personal interviews with a diverse group of educators. The cross-section of educators participating in the study includes a school board program coordinator, vice-principal and primary teacher, two high level administrators at the Department of Education, an elementary teacher, a former education consultant with the Department of Education, retired teacher and administrator, high school principal, and high school vice-principal and teacher.

The personal perspectives and experiences of this diverse group of educators is the major source of data in the study. A qualitative method of inquiry is employed to allow for in-depth study and analysis of individuals' thoughts and perceptions. Also, the nature of the problem to be examined is best served by the type of phenomenological inquiry which is open to questions and answers that may be unforeseen.

Sources of Data

The following questions form the basis of research into the perceptions of educators towards the role of arts in school curriculum:

1. What does the term "the arts" mean to you?
2. What is the role of arts in school curriculum?
3. How important, in your view, are the arts relative to other aspects of school curriculum?
4. What is your definition of quality education? Are the arts an essential component of quality education? Why or why not?
5. Are the arts "basic" to school curriculum?
(i.e. are arts fundamental to cultivation of imagination?
what about the notion of creativity as a component of learning?)
6. What sort of criteria should serve as a basis for deciding the relative value of subjects in school curriculum?
7. What are the implications, if any, of deletion or reduction of arts programs in the total school curriculum?
8. Can the arts contribute to school culture? If so, how?

In conducting the interviews, an open-ended technique was used. Each of the participants responded to the complete list of questions during the interview session. All sessions were completed in the approximate time of one hour.

Data Analysis

In examining the perceptions of educators towards the arts in school curriculum, the researcher drew upon two major sources: the information provided by interview subjects; and pertinent educational reports.

Data collected in the interviews and through critical examination of educational reports was analyzed using four categories. These categories reflect major themes addressed in the literature and are representative of issues most pertinent to the problem:

- A. Role of the arts in education
- B. Definition of quality education
- C. Criterion for deciding relative value of arts subjects in curriculum
- D. Implications for arts in school curriculum

These categories were employed to critically examine and interpret the collected data. The researcher, in reconstructing the data through the process of categorization, aimed to develop grounded theory which directly addresses the question of the perceived role of arts in school curriculum.

Limitations

The researcher recognizes certain limitations with respect to this study. The study is limited in that it is confined to a particular group of nine

educators in Newfoundland and Labrador. Also, the participants comprise a cross-section of educators representing a limited number of categories out of all possible categories that might be represented. Furthermore, this group was selected based upon availability for interview and proximity to the researcher.

THE PARTICIPANTS

Since the purpose of this study is to move towards an understanding of the perceptions of educators towards the role of the arts in school curriculum, one of the prime objectives in terms of consideration of participants, was to solicit the views of educators at different levels of the system. The term "educators" is used here in a general sense and is meant to include anyone connected with any and all aspects of primary, elementary, and secondary education in the Province. As a result, a cross-section of educators, representative of various levels of schooling and areas of expertise, were asked to participate in the study.

The educators who participated in the study were selected based upon relative position at various levels of the school system. They represent a body of expertise ranging from the level of curriculum administrator, program co-ordinator, school board assistant superintendent, department of education consultant, school principal, school vice-principal, arts teacher, as well as

primary, elementary, junior and senior high classroom teacher. While all of the participants had previously taught or are presently teaching in an urban setting, most have taught in rural settings across the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. The personal perspectives and experiences of this diverse group of educators comprise the major source of information in the study.

The discrete views of the participants were not known to the researcher before the study was initiated. Information was collected through personal interviews with each of the nine participants. These interviews were scheduled at a time and place convenient for each interview subject, and were approximately one hour in duration. At the beginning of the interview session, all subjects were given an opportunity to briefly peruse the eight interview questions. Prior to the interview, participants were aware that they would discuss their perceptions of the role of the arts in school curriculum, but not any of the participants had knowledge of the particular content of the questions to be asked.

The interview subjects are educators who, collectively, have taught or are presently teaching at all levels of schooling in the province of Newfoundland, from the primary grades to senior high school. The following table gives an overview of the backgrounds of the interview subjects who participated in the study:

Participants Used in the Study

Subject 1	<p>Present position: School board program coordinator of music, art, drama, and physical education</p> <p>Past experience: Music teacher all levels Music major area</p>
Subject 2	<p>Present position: Vice-principal/Primary Teacher</p> <p>Past experience: Primary teacher - 15 years</p>
Subject 3	<p>Present position: Administrator, Department of Education</p> <p>Past experience: Assistant Superintendent Classroom teacher all levels Science major area</p>
Subject 4	<p>Present position: Administrator, Department of Education</p> <p>Past experience: University Professor School principal</p>
Subject 5	<p>Present position: Elementary teacher - 30 years</p>
Subject 6	<p>Past experience: Curriculum consultant, Department of Education (now retired after 25 years in that position)</p>
Subject 7	<p>Past experience: Teacher, 30 years (retired) School principal and classroom teacher</p>
Subject 8	<p>Present position: Vice-principal/High School Teacher</p> <p>Past experience: Senior high teacher - 6 years Science major area</p>
Subject 9	<p>Present position: School principal - 15 years</p> <p>Past experience: High school teacher - 22 years Mathematics major area</p>

Interview Questions

The following list comprises the eight open-ended questions asked during the course of each interview. These questions form the basis of research into the perceptions held by the interview subjects towards the role of the arts in school curriculum in this Province. All participants were also given the opportunity to make comment, at the end of the interview, regarding any other perceptions of the role of arts which they considered important but did not have the opportunity to address during the course of questioning.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What does the term "the arts" mean to you?
2. What is the role of arts in school curriculum?
3. How important, in your view, are the arts relative to other aspects of school curriculum?
4. What is your definition of quality education? Are the arts an essential component of quality education? Why or why not?
5. Are the arts in any respect "basic" to school curriculum?
6. What sort of criteria should serve as a basis for deciding the relative value of subjects in school curriculum?
7. What are the implications, if any, of deletion or reduction of arts programs in the total school curriculum?
8. Can the arts contribute to school culture? If so, how?

INTERVIEW RESPONSES

The nine participants in the study responded to the complete list of questions as listed above. Only a few requests for clarification of a particular interview question occurred during the course of the interviews. The individual responses ranged from more lengthy and detailed to sometimes very brief and pointed. The interview sessions were audiotaped and later transcribed. Four categories, identified by the researcher as representative of major themes addressed in the literature and most pertinent to the research problem, were employed in analyzing the data. These are:

- A. Role of Arts in Education
- B. Definition of Quality Education
- C. Criterion for Deciding Value of School Subjects
- D. Implications for Arts in School Curriculum

In the remainder of this chapter, the responses of the participants are organized and presented with respect to these categories.

Responses Category A: Role of Arts in Education

Interview subject 1 (hereafter indicated as S1), a school board program coordinator, identified the role of the arts in curriculum as relating to the creative components of life; that part of the curriculum "... which fosters creativity and the creative skills and abilities that are inherent in us all, to varying degrees..."; S1 felt that the arts foster a means of expression which allows and enables children to express thoughts and feelings on a different level than they would verbally. She also responded that the role of the arts is "... basic to curriculum in that the arts enhance total development of the child - intellectually and emotionally, as well as enhancing expression in the basic skills of reading, writing and speaking". S1 also talked about the development of sensitivity to oneself and the world, and a sense of community as part of the role played by the arts in school curriculum.

Interview subject 2 (hereafter indicated as S2) a vice-principal and primary teacher, identified the arts as "...the more creative aspects of curriculum which develop creative abilities and cultivate imagination." S2 mentioned the arts as relating to the development of positive attitudes; the role played by the arts in building personal confidence and self-esteem; and the opportunities afforded by the arts for teaching and learning reading and

speaking skills, especially at the primary and elementary levels. This participant expressed a belief that the arts play an essential role in the education of a "well-rounded" person. A primary teacher, this participant also spoke of the wide use and importance of the arts - especially art and drama in teaching concepts in the primary grades.

Interview subject 3 (hereafter indicated as S3) an administrator at the Department of Education, described the role of arts as "...valuable and vital in achieving objectives such as identified and prized by the economic sector" i.e. communication skills, problem solving and the ability to work with others. This participant espoused the notion that the arts nurture the development of positive attitudes and values and the growth of the "human" person. S3 also described the role of the arts in school curriculum as providing access to a unique and important body of knowledge with which the student should become familiar.

Interview subject 4 (hereafter indicated as S3), expressed the notion that "...one cannot define school curriculum in terms of either arts or sciences - the sum of the two are what makes a good curriculum". S4 spoke of the role of arts as "...in keeping with the essence of education" which, he defined as moving young people from dependency to independency, in thought, in action and towards full responsibility for their own lives. This interviewee, a high

level administrator at the Department of Education, further pointed out that this would entail the development of the full range of students' abilities and talents. S4 described the role of arts as an essential component of the culturating experience - "... you cannot think of the exclusion of something that is so essential to their culturation".

Interview subject 5 (hereafter indicated as S5) an elementary teacher, perceived the role of the arts as one of opportunity for self-expression and social interaction; a tool for teaching or enriching other aspects of curriculum; and "... a definite outlet for some students i.e. artistic and creative abilities are given a forum in which to flourish ... even the bright kids enjoy the freedom of the arts." S5 noted another feature of the arts is that a sense of accomplishment, satisfaction and even peacefulness can result while children are engaged in these activities. This teacher explained, "I've even seen kids with behavioral problems who would be very quiet and peaceful while they are doing their art." S5 expressed the view that the role played by the arts in promoting positive feelings and attitudes is particularly important:

... I tend to want the kids to have some input into what goes on in the classroom ... so, I've asked them questions like 'What are some things that we do that you really like and want to keep doing?' ... and one of the threads that I see throughout is that they want to do more art.

Interview subject 6 (hereafter indicated as S6) an education consultant with the Department of Education for twenty-five years, described the role of the arts as providing "... all the experiences that the school can offer to the child for total integral growth."

The curriculum is founded upon our definition of education and any philosophy of education will never say that education is just for the intellect - that's an erroneous statement; education is for the total human person ... the intellect is not all there is to a person ... just as important is the development of alertness, empathy, observation, understanding, a sense of worth, of self-esteem ... these are gained from the arts.

S6 dismissed the notion that the arts exist only for those students who are "talented" in that area, explaining that the arts are for all students: "... we all have talents in various degrees ...we are not making a dramatist or an artist or a poet ... we're expecting to give ... sensitivity to art ...". This participant emphasized the value of the role played by the arts in promoting a sense or realization of the beauty in art, drama, or music; and in polishing other subjects in the curriculum.

Interview subject 7 (hereafter indicated as S7) a retired teacher and former administrator, talked about the role of arts in developing the entire person; in promoting sensitivity and creativity; and in providing options for effective use of leisure time. S7 expressed the notion that the arts are

important in balancing the curriculum, i.e. ensuring that the curriculum should not become saturated by the sciences.

Interview subject 8 (hereafter indicated as S8) a high school vice-principal, expressed the view that the arts are "...necessary for a well-rounded education and provide an avenue for students which keeps them interested and motivated." She posited that arts are a valuable component of curriculum, especially important to students who have natural ability and talent in the arts. S8 pointed out that the arts are very important to some students just as, for example, math is particularly important to students' whose natural abilities and interests lie in that area of curriculum.

Interview subject 9 (hereafter indicated as S9) referred to the arts as "the enriched curriculum" and related the importance of positive self-concept and its promotion through school arts programs. S9, a high school principal as well as a mathematics and physics teacher, perceived the role of arts as essential for, what he described as, an all-round education. This participant depicted the role of arts as one of enrichment and motivation for all students and noted "Drama is as useful in physics as it is in English." Furthermore, S9 contended that the arts "... tie all interest groups together, all ability groups, all teachers, all community ... [the arts are] the cement of education".

Responses Category B: Definition of Quality Education

A school board program coordinator (S1) defined quality education as education which develops the total person as well as providing quality instruction; as education which allows all children to develop their potentials; "... an education in which the physical, the emotional, social, artistic, and the aesthetic are all equally important. S1 used the term "balanced" to describe the school curriculum which, in her view, would best respond to these concerns and to her perception of quality education: "This balanced curriculum is what I feel is really important to a quality education."

This educator emphasized that quality education is "...not a narrow group of subjects focused on math, science and technology ... memorizing knowledge is not a quality education." S1 also defined quality education in terms of the opportunity for the development of artistic potentials and abilities which "can enhance our lives and our learning in all areas".

One primary teacher (S2) responded that "... self-concept ... is the backbone" of quality education, and a quality curriculum affords all children the opportunity to be involved and to participate in diverse program offerings which include both arts and sciences. S2 also spoke of the total school atmosphere, with particular mention of attitudes of children towards

themselves and each other; the teacher's relationships with children; and the teacher's knowledge and expertise in delivering programs within the curriculum as important components of quality education.

An administrator at the Department of Education (S3) identified quality education as preparing a student for the future, ensuring that the student is provided with the skills required in becoming a productive member of society. A quality education "... equips the student with the ability to communicate ... enables the student to appreciate the culture ... and helps the student become a well-rounded individual."

A high level administrator at the Department of Education (S4) articulated the notion that:

Quality education rests with providing an essential program to the development of a literate individual, one who can be a contributing member of society, in relation to the abilities and talents given.

This interviewee described the arts as "... absolutely essential to the full range of education." He explained:

When we think of individuals, there's something about human beings that means we have to be sensitive and caring, as opposed to simply mechanical workers in a philosophy of productivity ... A society can be measured by the extent to which it cares for its young and you can't measure that caring without thinking of the full range of education, particularly the arts.

One grade four teacher (S5) expressed the belief that quality education must involve the total child, " ... must affect the intellect as well as the emotions ... every aspect of the child, [including] the physical."

An education consultant with the Department of Education for twenty-five years (S6) answered that "Firstly, we must ask 'what do I expect of education?' and this will set us on the track of quality." She confidently related what would directly follow as a result of this first premise: "It is the inner growth, formation of the whole person - and I can't slice it off in any way." This participant also added that "... education is more than the intellect. A person is more than intellect", and that it is in consideration of these points that we must formulate a definition and sound philosophy of quality education and quality curriculum.

A retired teacher (S7) posited the following as comprising a quality education: "...education that would develop the entire person ... his feelings, self-esteem, sense of self, sensitivity; and also prepare the person for life." This participant felt that the arts, perhaps more significantly than some other aspects of curriculum, contributed to this kind of personal growth.

One high school vice-principal (S8) summarized the notion of quality education as synonymous with the idea of a well-rounded person. In her view, quality education provides access to and participation in a broad and diverse

curriculum, thereby contributing to the ultimate goal, namely, the well-rounded student. S8 sketched the qualifications which a well-rounded student might possess "... a background in mathematics, language, and the chemistries, the technologies ... exposure and involvement in physical education, in theatre arts, public speaking, choral performance."

A high school principal and mathematics teacher (S9), related that quality education allows an individual to become a well-rounded and successful member of society; allows that individual to feel confident and able to communicate effectively with others and to successfully compete for employment.

Responses Category C: Criterion for Deciding Value of School Subjects

A school board program coordinator (S1) suggested that school curriculum for each particular subject area needs to be re-examined; that the question must be asked "What do we want our children to leave school with as a basic education?"; that educators need to fully explore the notion of "balance" in the curriculum; that "... the affective domain, the intellectual, and the integration which will affect both..." must be taken into account in deciding the content of school curriculum. She also discussed the idea of

reducing what she referred to as "knowledge repetition" in certain areas of curriculum. She explained:

Sometimes it seems that children are introduced to concepts ... and they are introduced again the next year and again the next year ... it ends up being knowledge repetition and the understanding doesn't seem to evolve from that revisiting the way I expect it was intended. So, something is not working as well as it should be or was intended to. We need to re-examine what we are doing in the areas where children are not experiencing success and determine what we can do to improve...

A primary teacher (S2) posed the notion that the whole question of deciding the relative value of school subjects perhaps need not be a consideration. In her estimation, particularly at the primary and elementary levels, school subjects might be more effectively taught and perhaps more positively received by students, if curriculum was implemented using an all-inclusive" approach i.e., eliminate isolation of subject areas. This primary teacher explained that this would entail integration of subject areas and related the success of this method in the primary classroom:

We no longer break the language arts into subject areas like we did years ago. Now it is a networking kind of approach... which brings it all together. I think that art and drama ...should be all part of that. ...It's much easier to integrate everything.

An administrator at the Department of Education (S3) suggested that many subjects in school curriculum currently compete for basic status and that "basic" education today has a different connotation than in the past. He also replied that the opinion of the public may have considerable influence, as well as other stakeholders - "... the business community, agencies within education, and parents, all help to project what is important." S3, speaking from the viewpoint of his administrative position at the Department of Education which, as he pointed out, must consider all these stakeholders, stressed that this is merely a projection - "... we're not sure, at best we can only guess."

A high level administrator at the Department of Education (S4) perceived the main criterion to be graduation outcomes - consideration of the specifics that would be desirable for the student at graduation from high school. "What should a child be expected to know, realistically, at the end of primary? at the end of junior high? ... outcomes can be developed by levels."

S5, an elementary teacher, posed the notion that variety is needed in all aspects of the curriculum. She posited that school curriculum should include such areas as sex education, religion, driver training, health - all treated uniquely and given due consideration. S5 suggested that our criteria in building curriculum should be the premise of more subjects instead of less,

more exposure instead of less exposure. She insisted, "We need variety - math, science and the arts, music and physical education every day."

This participant, acknowledging that a lack of sufficient time in the school day might be seen as a drawback to the implementation of a varied and comprehensive curriculum, touched briefly upon possible solutions to this problem. These included the possibility of integration of subject areas, and extension of teaching time within the school day, or extension of the school year.

A curriculum consultant for twenty-five years at the Department of Education (S6) answered that the prime criteria for deciding the value of subjects is "... the development of persons in all their capacities ... curriculum must include all areas in order to fulfil this first premise." This education consultant also pointed to "... a great responsibility on the part of the Department of Education and school boards to educate parents and teachers, to promote curriculum talks and dialogue on what a quality education is all about."

S7, a retired teacher, replied that the criterion that decides the value of school subjects is already in place, namely, our curriculum guides and programs of study which come from the Department of Education. This participant felt that "The so-called 'experts' make the decisions". He also

expressed a belief that parents also have much influence in placing value on school curriculum. In his words, "It's possible that parents might decide there should be no art or music ... so it is important that we have parents in schools and participating so that they learn the importance and value of all subjects in curriculum."

A high school vice-principal (S8) responded "You have to look at what students will need when they finish with the public education system ... you must also serve the needs of all students." S8 cautioned against what she perceives to be an underlying message to students: "...arts are "extra", not needed in order to graduate." She further explained that this situation exists because of the way in which course requirements have been set up (particularly at the senior high level), often eliminating the option of arts for those students who would otherwise choose to include these courses.

S9, a high school principal, cited the Department of Education graduation requirements as a "given component" and explained

... as long as they're [the department] saying that health is required ... that adolescent relations are required, six mathematics are required ... well, you can see the complication... if [certain courses] are essential to graduation, students will no longer take choral performance 2103 when they can do language 3102...

This interviewee recounted the way in which his particular school made provision for many students to take arts courses "outside the regular curriculum" by scheduling these courses at lunch hour, after school and even on the weekends. He suggested that because the arts are perceived as less valuable in terms of graduation requirements, teachers must "develop criteria that break the mold of every day academic life" to ensure that these courses are a viable option for students.

Student population, facilities, and finances were also mentioned as having an effect upon decisions about the value of subjects in school curriculum. Lastly, S9 commented "... what society values has a considerable effect."

Responses Category D: Implications for Arts in School Curriculum

S1, a school board program coordinator, summed up her view of the result of deletion or reduction of arts programs as "...a sterile and unfavourable environment in schools ... the arts are life - you lose the life of your school." She explained:

I would challenge anyone to say that the arts are not a major influence in what is happening in the atmosphere of a school. They [the arts] help celebrate. They help heal when things have not gone well... or there is a particular trauma to deal with. They boost the school spirit. They are the social life of the school in that they help the school become a community.

S1 suggested that if the school were to lose the arts, and consequently these kinds of sharing experiences, then it may be just as well that students "stay at home and plug into a computer ". Lastly, S1 pointed out that perhaps one of the most dire implications for the loss of arts in curriculum would be that certain areas of personal development might become ignored. In the view of this educator, "... the physical, emotional, social, artistic, and aesthetic ... which receive attention through the arts, are all equally important".

If our educational system starts to ... focus on a rather narrow group of subjects, then our children will lose [the opportunity to develop] certain skills and certain intelligences which can be developed through [the arts].

A vice-principal and primary teacher (S2) suggested that even if arts programs were deleted on paper, the arts themselves would still take place in schools. "Can you imagine if someone told me not to do art or drama anymore? It may not be in my program guide or my program of studies but I'd still do it." This educator expressed the view that the arts permeate all aspects of curriculum and that she could not envision an effective curriculum without them. Other implications mentioned include a loss of music and drama teachers from schools; and possible adverse effects upon school culture.

An administrator at the Department of Education (S3) responded "... a major implication would be a very narrow and restrictive education for

students." This participant also alluded to the obvious implications for teachers who teach these courses. Furthermore, S3 spoke of possible conflict with regard to the future of the arts and their perceived value in curriculum.

He explained:

... Whether or not the arts will withstand the period we're in now will, to a considerable degree depend on how the contribution [of the arts] is portrayed by those who know. I should point out that the general population and those who are non-arts educators really would not appreciate the role that the arts can play ... I don't think there is any question ... there are areas that we need to look at ... one is focusing upon the economic value of the arts.

While S3 depicted the arts as basic to education, he stressed that there must be a clear delineation of outcomes for arts education and that the role of the arts as part of the school agenda must be clearly identified. This administrator insisted that communicating this kind of information to educators and the public in general is vital to the survival of the arts in school curriculum.

... for instance, that they have a role to play in problem solving, in improving communication skills ... there has got to be these linkages ... to get the support of the general population - vital in order to ... maintain [arts] as a core area of the curriculum.

S4, a high level administrator at the Department of Education, answered that we must reshape not only the organization of curriculum but also reshape the philosophy of those who will perform that task:

Far more attention than in the past must be placed upon science, math and technology, and far more attention than in the past must be placed on music and literature because we've been underperforming - a fact upon which we must build to improve.

A second point mentioned by S4 further addressed the issue of deletion or reduction of arts programs:

What really distinguishes humans from others is the sense of feeling ... of understanding ... of compassion, sense of caring. These attributes flow from great literature, from great music, they flow from the so-called definition of the arts. I don't think you can develop sensitive, thinking, alert, creative, thinking young people without arts.

One elementary teacher (S5) replied that the prospect of school without the arts is a rather unsettling one. In her view, school without the arts would become a very different place - "not at all the place that students would be happy to go to each morning". In her words,

... to be honest, I feel... alarmed at the thought of taking away the arts. ... If students didn't have [the arts] and the extra-curricular activities that come as a result of those classes ... it would definitely be a big loss in our system. ...I can't envision that [the arts] could be gone.

This educator replied that in the event that the arts are deleted or reduced in the curriculum students would be denied knowledge of and an appreciation for music and the arts; that school spirit and school culture would be negatively effected. She noted that "... [the arts promote] the kinds of experiences that children carry with them throughout their school years and throughout their lives ... something very valuable."

A curriculum consultant for twenty-five years with the Department of Education (S6) articulated the belief that without the arts, the school curriculum would represent "just a skeleton" of education, that as a result "... there would be no such thing as having a truly educated person". She emphasized that the curriculum must embrace the academic, the moral, the spiritual, the social, the affective, and the physical aspects of education. Without the arts, she described the school curriculum as a "disaster". In her view, "true" curriculum must always consider the development of the total person.

... true curriculum has to have the total person in mind. The school is life ... the arts help its richness and sensitivity ... what you are trying to present is all that comes up in life that the person can cope with, enjoy ... the school could not function without it.

A retired teacher (S7) suggested that if arts subjects were not an integral part of a child's schooling, part of that child's education would be incomplete, the child would lack the opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge necessary for a well-rounded education. This participant spoke of the arts as important in educating feeling and sensitivity: "... an education that neglects to educate feeling and sensitivity is one that has failed to help the student reach his or her full potential."

S8, a high school administrator, envisioned a school without the arts as a place where the entire school atmosphere would be adversely affected. Speaking from the perspective of a senior high teacher, she felt that as a result of losing arts, the schools would lose students: "I know that involvement in arts courses has kept a lot of students in school, has kept students interested and motivated, and happier with themselves." This participant also felt that resource-based learning would be negatively affected: "... without the arts, resource-based learning would be nothing." S9, a high school principal, pointed to the student's loss of ownership of school as a direct consequence of loss or reduction of arts programs. He explained:

... a sense of loss of ownership of school ... a sense that something special is going on there - music and drama [for example] give a sense of cohesiveness to students, a sense of sharing and pride ... the experiences that they've shared with their peers have been the ribbon that's gone through everything.

S9 contended that the arts "are essential to a fibre of the population of any school, big or small, perhaps 30-40%" and that "... taking away the arts would be the same as taking away math or physical education - taking away the very thing that gives any particular student that special edge".

This interviewee also perceived a strong link between arts subjects, particularly music and drama, and the development of a positive and invigorating school culture. In his view, school culture encompasses the relationships between students, teachers and community. He expressed the idea that without the arts, school would be "a very different place" in terms of the kinds of relationships and social interactions fostered through the arts.

Summary

Only one of the educators (S1) of those who participated in the study had been directly involved in teaching arts curriculum as a specialist in that area. Interestingly, all participants, irrespective of expertise or administrative status, expressed definitive opinions regarding the role and value of arts subjects in school curriculum. It would appear that, in all cases, participants perceived the arts as a positive and basic component of the present school curriculum.

In this chapter the reader has been presented with the information given by the interview subjects. In the following chapter, an analysis of the interview data is provided.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter presents an analysis of the information provided by the interview subjects. Firstly, the researcher moves towards a broader view of the perceptions of the interview group as a whole. Secondly, the chapter attempts to indicate connections, i.e., possible consistencies or inconsistencies, with respect to educational reports and to literature dealing with arts in education.

The data is organized and reconstructed through categorization, once again employing the categories which had been previously established:

Category A: Role of Arts in Education

Category B: Definition of Quality Education

Category C: Criterion for Deciding the Value of School Subjects

Category D: Implications for Arts in Curriculum

Defining Arts

The starting point of this inquiry into perceptions regarding the role of the arts in school curriculum was the question "What does the term 'the arts' mean to you?". The arts in school curriculum, as perceived by the nine interviewees, were most generally defined as music, drama, art and literature. Most commonly associated with the arts in curriculum was the school music program, or the classroom visual art period. Other respondents described the arts as "those areas which are motivated by creativity" (S1); that part of curriculum which promotes the development of sensitivity (S6); and as the "performing arts" such as singing, instrumental bands, drama, the fine arts, dancing (S8).

One high school principal gave a rather striking reply, defining the arts as "... all the areas outside of the academic areas such as math and science, physics, the things we take for granted as being the real curriculum" (S9). This particular definition is remarkable not only in that it points to a polarization of the arts and the sciences, but also depicts the arts as not a part of the "real", i.e., the established core curriculum.

Certainly, this educator's comments reflect the theory posited by Eisner (1992) which points to "a dubious status hierarchy" among subjects taught in

schools. Eisner speaks about the juxtaposition of what is considered intelligence as opposed to talent which places the arts and the sciences at opposite ends of the educational spectrum. Furthermore, the perception that these subjects are in competition results from what Eisner calls a basic misunderstanding about the arts in general and, in particular, the contribution of the arts to learning.

This kind of misperception may indeed be central to the issue of balance in curriculum. A balanced curriculum would suggest harmony between these and other school subjects, would promote a system in which these subjects would complement and support each other. It is interesting to note that the notion of integration of arts throughout the curriculum was discussed by several of the interviewees. In the words of one high school principal (S9), "Drama is as useful in physics as it is in English".

Several educators expressed the idea that they could not envision a successful school curriculum without the activities and opportunities afforded by the arts. In particular, one elementary teacher (S5) recounted how her students successfully learned math concepts through musical activities. A vice-principal and primary teacher (S2), told about the drama and art activities through which she teaches many concepts in her primary classes. This

educator firmly believed that even if arts programs were to be deleted on paper, the arts themselves would still take place in schools.

Category A: Role of the Arts in School Curriculum

The question "What is the role of the arts in school curriculum?" elicited much discussion. The interviewees related the role of arts to: building positive attitudes, building self-esteem and self-confidence, and to development of sensitivities; self-expression, enhancement of communication skills, basic skill development, acquiring knowledge, resource-based learning, and integration of school subjects; creativity and imagination, student motivation and interest, use of leisure time; appreciation of culture, social development, sense of community, school atmosphere, total school environment; provision of a well-rounded education; the notion of balanced curriculum; and development of the total person.

The preceding list is a basic summary of all roles mentioned by the participants as related to the arts in education. While some items were mentioned only in passing, others appeared in discussions with more than one

of the participants. For the purpose of analysis, the researcher categorized the list by identifying: 1) topics which occurred most frequently, 2) topics which were iterated by more than one of the participants, or 3) topics which were addressed in significant detail by several members of the interview group. The following seven themes resulted. These themes encompass all of the responses stated in the original list and are employed in analysing the information provided in

Category A: Role of Arts in Education

- I. Developing the Well-Educated Individual
- II. Fostering Creativity
- III. Developing the Human Person
- IV. Enriching Total School Curriculum
- V. Promoting Social Growth
- VI. The Notion of Curriculum Balance
- VII. Developing Skills

Theme 1

Developing the Well-Educated Individual

Among all of the participants, one of the most commonly articulated perceptions of the role of school arts subjects was the idea that the arts are an essential component in school curriculum. Without exception, all interviewees expressed the opinion that the arts are a necessary ingredient in

the total total education of the individual. Furthermore, one education consultant (S6) suggested that in the absence of arts, neither a "well-rounded education" nor a "well-rounded person" could result.

The notion of well-roundedness was recited by the majority of the educators who participated in the study. One of the interviewees provided some clarification as to what is meant by "well-rounded" in terms of one's education. S4, a high level administrator at the Department of Education, pointed out that the "essence" of education is to enable the young person to move towards full responsibility for his or her own life, towards the full range of abilities, talents and intelligences of which he or she is capable. This characterizes the well-rounded person, the well-educated student. It is a depiction, lofty in its ideals, that certainly would not be unfamiliar to most educators. One may find this educational philosophy in the writings of Greene, Eisner, Gardner, Arnheim and others.

Several participants in the study identified the arts as a unique and valuable body of knowledge with which the student should become familiar (S1, S3, S5) and suggested that the role played by the arts in this respect is important to the education of students. S1, a music specialist, pointed out that knowledge of the arts is important, not only in terms of practical skills and understandings but also in terms of the close connection of the arts with

our diverse cultural history as a human society. She pointed out that the arts play a role in "developing different abilities [and] potentials ... helping us to become more sensitive to the world as a whole and as we know it". As Rose (1990) has pointed out, the arts are a lived expression of culture, and provide diverse opportunities for social and cultural interaction.

One high level administrator at the Department of Education (S4) articulated that the "essence" of education is moving young individuals from dependency to independency and towards total responsibility for their lives. If one accepts such a definition of education then it would seem logical that the curriculum must serve this premise if we are to succeed in realizing these goals. Certain questions immediately come to mind. Firstly, is it possible to achieve such objectives if the curriculum, our means of attaining education, is not broad and diversified? Secondly, is not the development of the individual person at the very core of the educational process that is, in essence, preparing for future life? With respect to this matter we may reflect upon Einstein's thoughts about education. In his words, "...knowledge is dead; the school, however, serves the living ... the aim must be the training of independently acting and thinking individuals...".

The case for the arts as preparation for life is expounded by Greene (1988) who writes that self-direction, insightfulness, and the capability to make

sense of the world are prime characteristics of the educated person. She speaks of the attainment of personal autonomy through a broadening of experience and a multiplicity of perspectives. The notion of education as preparation for life is also expressed by Kiester (1985). Interestingly, Kiester's view may be closely paralleled with that of Einstein in that she dismisses knowledge as the focus of education and emphasizes the student's relationship with the world.

Robinson (1991), who has pointed to the arts as fundamental in spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development, argues that the arts provide essential learnings for the responsibilities and experiences of adult life. Adler (1982), has also expressed the view that education, a process of preparing for life, must consider personal growth as a major objective.

Theme II

Fostering Creativity

Three of the interviewees asserted that the arts play a major role in fostering creativity and imagination, providing access to a form of "... expression which allows and enables children to express thoughts and feelings on a different level than they would verbally" (S1). S5 spoke of the creative

freedom of the arts and of the vast opportunities afforded by art, drama, and music for individual self-expression. A vice-principal and primary teacher (S2) related that cultivation of the imagination and the development of creative abilities are visible outcomes of drama and art experiences at the primary level. She provided a vivid depiction of her own classroom experience:

[The arts] ... develop children's ability to be creative... and [their ability] to project themselves and their feelings ... I've particularly noticed that when they go to music, for example. Also, when I act out a story with children in the classroom, for example, kindergarten children [who are] acting out "The Enormous Turnip" or "Three Billy Goats Gruff", they get really involved ... they use language much more readily ... and lose their inhibitions. Actually, I do it myself, too.

These comments point to Gamwell, who has argued for the importance of independent thinking and developed imagination as prerequisite skills for employment in the future. He suggests that Newfoundland educators must work towards a balanced curriculum, with equal emphasis on the arts and sciences and with provision for opportunity for development of the imagination. The perceptions of the interviewees are also reminiscent of Elliot (1991) who depicts creativity and imagination as essential components of learning. Eisner (1992), who perhaps best encapsualizes the views expressed by the interviewees on this point, posits that one of the major roles of the arts in school curriculum is celebration of the imagination and personal

interpretation. He argues that the arts provide a panacea for the cultivation of creativity and imagination.

Theme III

Developing the Human Person

The notion of development of the 'whole' individual or education of the total human person was expressed by several of the interviewees as directly related to the role of arts. A school board coordinator (S1) responded that arts enhance total development of the child, intellectually and emotionally, as well as enhancing expression in the basic skills of reading, writing and speaking". S6, an education consultant, described the arts as providing all the experiences that the school can offer to the child for total integral growth. Four of the nine interview subjects spoke of the role of arts in terms of their contribution to the total development of the individual.

Another common theme in the responses to the question of the role of the arts dealt with the development of positive feelings and attitudes. Several of the respondents replied that the arts play a definite role in building personal confidence and self-esteem, as well as fostering positive attitudes towards others and towards school in general. An elementary teacher (S5)

referred to the "freedom of the arts" and to a sense of satisfaction and even peacefulness while children are engaged in these activities. A high school principal (S9) spoke of the arts as "the enriched curriculum" and pointed to the importance of positive self-concept and its promotion through the arts. A primary teacher (S2) believed self-concept to be the backbone of quality education. She stressed the importance of positive attitudes and self-esteem in the learning process. Furthermore, S2 perceived the arts as providing experiences that foster the development of these kinds of intrinsic qualities.

In examining these perceptions, we are encouraged to refer to Dobbin (1994) who provides considerable argument for the relationship between the arts in education and the development of the individual as a human person. Dobbin (1994) recently identified the issue of total integral growth as a matter to be addressed in school curriculum. As did many of the interviewees, Dobbin spoke of the curriculum as encompassing the total growth of the student as a human person and the drawing out of the individual's fullest potential. As Dobbin has pointed out, education is inherently "personal" in that it affects all of the individual's relationships with self, with others, and with the world.

It may be interesting to note also that the Aims of Education for Newfoundland (1976) speak directly to the philosophy of total development

of the human person. The objectives listed in this document point unquestionably to the total human development of the student, intellectually, physically, mentally and spiritually.

There is an abundance of literature which would support the notion that arts provide opportunities for the formation of positive attitudes towards self and others. Lee (1985) argues that the arts develop self-awareness, awareness of the environment, of inner feelings and outward perceptions. Gamwell (1991) points to the development of self-confidence and self-control. Unsworth (1990), who has identified lack of self-esteem as one of the major factors in school failures, posits that personal relationships and confidence in self-expression are developed and nurtured through involvement in school arts programs.

Theme IV

Enriching Total School Curriculum

Four of the nine interviewees perceived the role of arts subjects as enriching the total school curriculum or as a valuable tool in the teaching of other subject areas. One administrator (S6) characterized the arts as "polishing" other subjects in the curriculum. A high school principal (S9)

depicted the arts as "the enriched curriculum", arguing that drama is as useful in physics as it is in English. An elementary teacher (S5) related how music could be an effective method of teaching and learning certain math concepts at the grade four level and described the arts as "a tool for teaching or enriching other aspects of curriculum".

One high school teacher and administrator (S8) noted that the arts provide an avenue for students which keeps them interested in school and motivated to work. Furthermore, she pointed out that the arts and arts programs actually keep some students from dropping out of school. This educator gave actual examples of students whose involvement in drama clubs or musical performances was the highlight of their school experience. Involvement in such activities, explained this vice-principal, necessitated that they keep their academics at a satisfactory level. Having experienced personal success and a sense of self-satisfaction as a result of their participation, the school life of these students was happier, and they became further motivated to do well. According to this teacher, the arts ... "definitely, are keeping some students in school".

A high school principal (S9) also spoke of the need for programs such as music and drama in providing areas of curriculum that fulfill the special needs and interests of students. He suggested that reduction or deletion of

arts in a school would have as similar an effect upon some students as would the deletion of sports or advanced mathematics on some students. In the estimation of this school principal, the arts are "essential to a fibre of every school population... it gives them that special edge".

That there is a positive correlation between quality education and a vibrant arts curriculum within a school system has been cited by Lehman (1988). Also, Lee (1985), in reciting some of the most common justifications for inclusion of the arts in school curriculum, argues that the arts can provide enrichment to the school program; that arts give teachers alternative means, through a variety of methods and resources, to introduce and reinforce learning.

Unsworth (1990) has pointed out that the arts provide opportunities to experience immediate success, to develop personal relationships and to gain confidence in self-expression. Unsworth posits that effective arts programs provide a positive learning environment that motivates and challenges the potential drop-out, as well as meets the various intelligences, talents and learning styles of all students.

Theme V

Cultural and Social Growth

Five of the respondents talked about the role of the arts in promoting a sense of sharing or a sense of community within the school. In particular, mention was made of student performances at school concerts and assemblies on various occasions during the school year, and of performance groups which performed outside the school as well as outside the province. This kind of interaction and working 'together' was perceived by the respondents as a binding and positive force within the school, fostering positive relationships between the students themselves as well as promoting a good attitude towards school in general.

Also touched upon was the opportunity for the surrounding community to become involved in, and to gain awareness of what is taking place in the school - benefiting both the school community as well as the larger community, and contributing positively to overall school atmosphere.

One administrator at the Department of Education (S3) spoke of the nurturing of the ability to work with others as an outcome of participation in a school performance. A grade four teacher (S5) recounted the opportunities for social interaction which become possible within school as a direct result

of drama or music programs; the opportunities for students to interact and express themselves, and to develop social skills. A high school principal (S9) spoke of a sense of ownership of school that results from music, drama, and other programs that bring students together in an atmosphere of sharing: "... the arts ... tie all interest groups together, all ability groups, all teachers, all community".

Some of the literature on arts education points to the certainty that children not only learn about their culture and the culture of others through the arts, but that through arts experiences, children formulate their own cultural expression. Rose (1990) writes that culture is the expression of human consciousness, shaped and produced by people who are both receivers and makers of culture. She posits that the arts are a lived expression of culture and the means of a common language and common expression.

Reimer (1989) writes about "the ongoing rituals which help to mold us into a society" and to the fulfillment of societal needs through a particular arts subject, music. Harris (1986) discusses the development of the sense of social responsibility through group interaction and cooperation through music education. She also points to the learning and expression of culture through folk music and dance.

Theme VI

The Notion of Curriculum Balance

Three of the respondents depicted the arts as playing an important role in creating 'balance' in school curriculum. A high school vice-principal (S8) suggested that the arts are as important as any other aspect of curriculum; that there are students who have natural abilities in the arts just as those with abilities in math or physical education. An administrator at the Department of Education (S4) articulated the notion that "the sum of the two [arts and sciences] are what makes a good curriculum".

A retired educator (S7) expressed a concern that present society's high demand for more knowledge and skills in science and technology might result in the deletion of arts subjects in school curriculum. This participant related the notion that the demands of our technological society actually elevate the need for arts in school curriculum; that a balance of arts and sciences is essential.

In light of these comments we are reminded of Dearden (1984) who has pointed out that the issue of balance in school curriculum is a complex and controversial matter. Deciding what constitutes a proper balance in terms of school subjects is a matter of perception, value and judgment.

Furthermore, the question of how we are to recognize this balance as having been attained is a difficult one. Again, as Dearden notes, depending upon what is being judged and who is making the judgment, the very same provision could be viewed as balanced or unbalanced.

Lawton (1987) points to curriculum balance as the key to effective schooling. His idea that an "appropriate mix of humanities and science" is essential in educating students to live successfully in present and future society was also a view articulated by the majority of interviewees. Also consistent with Lawton's definition of balance, almost all of the interviewees felt that balance in curriculum pointed to a complementary blending of the arts and other curriculum subjects. This balance was described as both desirable and essential in the school curriculum.

Theme VII

Developing Basic Skills

Skill development was discussed by several of the respondents as part of the role played by the arts. A program coordinator (S1) noted that music "enhances reading, speaking and other skills"; a vice-principal and primary teacher (S2) also mentioned that reading, writing and communicating skills

are augmented by the arts. S3, a high level administrator with the Department of Education, pointed out that the role of arts is "... valuable and vital in achieving objectives such as identified and prized by the economic sector i.e. communication skills [and] problem solving...". Generally, these respondents expressed confidence that all students could benefit educationally from exposure to the arts, and that involvement in arts programs could better enhance understanding of other areas.

These comments point to Eisner (1985) who argues that the arts are "cognitive activities, guided by human intelligence, that make unique forms of meaning possible". Eisner uses the term "sensory intelligence" and argues that all concepts are basically sensory in nature, that cognition is not separate from perception or emotion. He posits that interaction of the senses enriches meaning, and that the arts play an essential role in the cognitive process of sensory discrimination and the development of imagination.

The research of Gardner (1983) stresses the cognitive aspect of artistry and demonstrates that the arts are a matter of the mind. Gardner posits that symbol-making, one's understanding and interaction with artistic symbols, is the hallmark of human cognition. It is interesting to note the example given by one primary teacher (S2), who observed that the children in her class who were involved in arts activities tended to be better readers, "... good at

understanding what's read or what's spoken to them, what's told to them ... better at ... seat work and being able to read from charts".

We may also recall the theory of "visual thinking" proposed by Arnheim (1982), that all problem-solving takes place in perceptual imagery. Arnheim points out that facts are meaningless unless there is productive thinking which involves understanding the relationships of things to one another. He concludes that the arts are systematized ways of thinking and knowing. Arnheim, who describes the arts as "training ground par-excellence" for the learning of visual relationships, identifies certain cognitive processes directly related to the arts, including exploration, comparison, analysis, synthesis, and problem-solving.

Category B: Definition of Quality Education

The interviewees were asked to indicate their personal definition of the term 'quality education'. There were two commonly occurring themes in response to this query: firstly, six of the nine participants referred to the notion that a quality education must provide opportunities and experiences which focus upon the total development of an individual; secondly, six out of nine interviewees spoke of quality education as synonymous with a well-

rounded education, in other words, an education which produces a well-rounded individual as its result.

Overall, the notion of quality education was defined by the respondents in terms of or in relation to: the development of the total individual; a well-rounded education; building positive attitudes and self-esteem; social development; development of communication skills; quality curriculum; balanced curriculum; and appreciation of culture.

The following themes have emerged as a result of the information provided in Category B: Definition of Quality Education. These themes are employed in presenting and analysing the data:

- I. Development of the Total Individual
- II. Social Development
- III. Balanced Curriculum

Theme I

Educating the Total Individual

The perception that a quality education includes the development of the total human individual was one of the most commonly voiced themes in Category B. A consultant with the Department of Education for twenty-five

years (S6), spoke passionately and eloquently of what she termed "... the inner growth, [and] formation of the whole person" as the premise of a quality education. She suggested that formulation of a curriculum must be based upon expectations, that the question must be asked 'What do I expect from education?' Answering that question, she assured, " will set you on the track of quality!" Quality curriculum, in this participant's view, provides all the experiences that the school can offer for total integral growth.

Several participants expressed a similar perception, namely, that the total intellectual and emotional growth of the individual must be a major consideration of quality education: that quality education must provide opportunities for development of the full range of abilities (S1); must involve the total child, intellect and emotions (S5); prepares a person for life (S7); must consider the total development of the individual (S4).

Several of the interviewees used the term "well-rounded" to describe quality education. As the interviews unfolded, it became clear that the terms "well-rounded" education and "quality" education were used synonymously.

The well-rounded student was depicted by one school board program coordinator (S1) as one who has developed to his or her fullest potential; a high level administrator at the Department of Education (S4) articulated that such an individual is "... a literate individual, one who can be a contributing

member of society, in relation to the abilities and talents given"; S3, also a high level administrator at the Department of Education, spoke of the well-rounded individual as one who is prepared for the future, equipped with good communication skills and with "...the ability to obtain those skills that are required to be a productive member of society ...".

Two of the respondents perceived the development of communication skills to be an important component of a quality education. Both S3 and S9 felt that the ability to effectively communicate is essential in becoming a successful member of the community and in securing employment for the future. Both respondents also depicted arts programs as providing valuable opportunities for skill development in reading, writing and speaking.

The perception that a well-rounded education must include the arts was voiced by all of the respondents. When questioned as to whether or not they would consider the arts to be an essential component of school curriculum, again, all of the participants answered that the arts are essential to quality education.

Defining quality education is a difficult task, as Dearden (1984) has pointed out. The well-educated individual, as described by the nine educators who participated in the study, is one who has achieved her or his fullest potential in terms of personal abilities and talents; is literate; prepared for the

future; has good communication skills; and is able to use those skills in becoming a productive member of society. How are these attributes to be attained? They are to be attained through school curriculum.

It would seem logical to posit that quality education implies quality curriculum. Is there a connection between arts education and quality education? In other words, can the arts contribute in a significant way to the outcomes of what is perceived to be quality or well-rounded education? What are the connections, if any, between the arts and human development?

Many have argued that the arts not only contribute but are essential to quality education. Rose (1993) has pointed out that the arts are a "proven site" for promoting those characteristics that have been identified by recent educational reports as essential in education. In her view, these include the ability to communicate, think critically, to conceptualize and problem-solve; the development of moral and social awareness, positive attitudes and values; the acquisition of knowledge, language and culture; the development of adaptability and independence; and development of social and cultural identity.

As Kiester (1985) has noted, quality education means total education. In her view, the goals of total education include functional literacy, intellectual development, cultural understanding and self-realization. Kiester

posits that intellect is developed "through perception of pattern in a mass of abstract data", in other words, through established patterns of thinking. She also emphasizes that this kind of perception can be developed through mathematics and music. Kiester writes that educators have recognized that pattern perception and also other intellectual processes are fundamental to the arts and that these processes include planning, relating, problem-solving and decision-making.

Theme II

Social Development

That the development of social values is an important aspect of quality education was a second major point of agreement among the participants. One vice-principal (S2) talked about her perception of the importance of positive social relationships and school atmosphere as a component of quality education. In her view, the interactions between students and teachers and the overall atmosphere within a school play a very important role in a child's development of attitudes towards self, towards school, and to learning in general.

Three of the nine participants (S3, S4, and S9) listed the building of skills "necessary to becoming a productive member of society" as an important aspect of quality education. S3, an administrator at the Department of Education, cited an appreciation of culture, one's own as well as that of others, as a concern of quality education. He also pointed to the arts - especially literature, drama, music and art programs, as essential in gaining a true appreciation of culture.

The recent Task Force on Education (1992) addresses the need for cultural awareness and understanding in education. It points out that "Cultural tolerance and understanding are expected to be developed among students as they progress through school" (p.216). The Final Report of the Task Force states:

... part of the socializing responsibility of public education is to recreate the knowledge, skills and customs which are indigenous to its society (p.27).

Kiester (1985) has written that one of the fundamental goals of quality education is to enhance cultural and cross-cultural awareness and global understanding. In this respect, she describes the arts as a "common ground of self-identity and universal awareness" and as "eloquent transmitters of a people's spirit - their joys, their sorrows, their inner lives". Kiester points out

that while some cultures have been found to exist without reading and writing, none have ever been found without some form of expression of art. She posits that the arts can act as a bridge to all subjects in school curriculum.

References to arts education and its contribution to the social and cultural development of children are also found in Reimer (1970), Rose (1990), Langer (1971), and Gardner (1990).

Theme III

The Notion of Balanced Curriculum

The notion of balance in curriculum is one which is perceived by the educators in the study as pertinent to a number of issues. The issue of balanced curriculum was first raised in our discussions about the role of arts in curriculum, and now reappears as one of the major concerns with respect to the issue of quality education.

S1 spoke of a "balanced education" and portrayed the curriculum of a quality education as one that balances the arts and sciences; as an education which attends to the "physical side, the emotional, the social, the artistic". This school board program coordinator pointed out that balance also involves the provision of sufficient time in the scheduling of curriculum so that "...

learning can occur and [there is] a lasting impression on students". Her words seemed to suggest that, at the present time, this kind of balance does not exist in our schools.

Achieving [such a balance] would require some major changes to our system and in how we approach education... in what we are valuing as education for our children. Unfortunately, every group has its own political direction, and sometimes these are the ones being heard and the true valuing of a more rounded, balanced education is not accepted. People will say, 'Yes, we want this for our children', but when it comes down to practical things such as the subjects offered and the amount of time ... and how these are organized within the school setting, we are really detracting from what could be a balanced education.

One high school vice-principal (S8) expressed a similar view of the need for balance of subjects within the school curriculum, asserting that quality education would make available to students "... an education in all areas". As previously noted, the need for a balanced and relevant curriculum has been identified by the Royal Commission (1992). As to how this need will be met, in terms of the arts subjects is unclear.

That there is a need for balance in school curriculum and that the arts make a valid and unique contribution to this balance has been argued by Dearden (1984), Lawton (1987), Eisner (1992) and others.

Category C: Criterion for Deciding the Value of School Subjects

The participants in the study were asked to describe their perceptions of what criteria should be used in deciding the relative value of subjects in curriculum. This particular question proved to be a troublesome one, in the words of one teacher, "difficult to answer". Generally, participants took a few moments to pause and reflect before responding, sometimes asking that the question be repeated or clarified.

A number of the participants perceived the issue of valuing school subjects as out of the control of those educators who actually deliver the curriculum (S7, S8, S9). Their comments point to a sense of powerlessness with regard to this particular issue and to the question of why educators feel such a powerlessness in this process. Their perceptions and concerns also raise the other important issues, i.e., the empowerment of those who make these curricular decisions; the basis upon which such decisions are made; the opportunity for input from educators who have valuable contributions to make to the decision-making process.

The respondents portrayed the following as pertinent to making decisions about relative value of school subjects: re-examination of school curriculum; evaluating expected outcomes of education; balancing curriculum

content; integrating school subjects; eliminating knowledge repetition; educating and involving parents and the public; examining programs of study and course requirements; and making provision for development of students in all capacities.

As mentioned previously, in reviewing the information provided by the participants, certain themes emerged. In Category C: Deciding the Criteria for Valuing of School Subjects, the data is presented and analysed with respect to the following major themes:

- I. Outcomes of Education
- II. Public Perceptions
- III. Achieving Balance in Curriculum

Theme I

Outcomes of Education

A number of the interviewees suggested that in deciding the value of school subjects certain questions about the desired outcomes of education must be posed by those who have the authority to make these decisions. It was suggested that effective decision-making would neither be prudent nor possible in the absence of such questions. For example, a school board

program coordinator (S1) pointed to one question which she felt was of particular import: What do we want our children to leave school with as a basic education?

A high level administrator at the Department of Education (S4) articulated that a major criterion for deciding the content of school curriculum must be consideration of the specifics that would be "desirable for the student at graduation from ... school". He also alluded to consideration of the question "What should a child be expected to know, realistically, at the end of primary? at the end of junior high?" He proposed consideration of the outcomes that might be expected and developed at each level of schooling. Similarly, one high school vice-principal (S8) insisted, "You have to ask what students will need when they finish with the public education system".

A high school principal (S9) again pointed to graduation outcomes as a "given component" but cautioned that the current organization of graduation requirements needs to be re-examined and improved upon. An administrator at the Department of Education (S3) noted that many subjects in school curriculum now compete for basic status. In his view, making decisions pertaining to the relative value of school subjects must involve asking questions about how the requirements of a basic education have changed for the present generation.

It is interesting to note that with respect to the question concerning criteria for deciding the value of school subjects, the participants formulated their answers by posing some very fundamental questions. The question "What do we want our children to leave school with as a basic education?" was the basic premise of the school board program coordinator's response (S1) as well as that expressed by three other participants (S4, S8, and S9). This question is not only a practical one but a vital one.

A cover story in Maclean's Magazine (March 1994), dealing with the issue of basic education in Canadian public schools, reported that business people are placing high priority on the ability to think and solve problems. The article also reported that employers now seek graduates who "have developed minds that are flexible rather than simply flush with information". That future employers will continue to look for these kinds of characteristics and abilities is certain. As Kiester (1985) has pointed out, for the next century we need people who are flexible and who can adapt to an ever-changing world. She emphasizes the need for today's students to become comfortable with change, and to be able to improvise and face new situations with confidence and creativity. Furthermore, Kiester writes that education which focuses upon "basic" skills of reading, writing and mathematics is "seriously imbalanced", that this sort of thinking and learning alone is only

"half-education". What, then, is the other "half"? In her view, attention must be given to "creative, holistic, and feelingful thinking". Where in the school curriculum would provision be made for such experiences? ... the arts.

The issue of how the arts contribute to fundamental educational goals has also been addressed by Greene (1988), Robinson (1991), Gamwell (1993), Eisner (1985) Rose (1990) and others.

Theme II

Education and Involvement of Parents and the Public

Five of the nine participants spoke about the importance of educating parents and the public about educational matters and enlisting the support and confidence of these groups. It was strongly felt that parents and the general public need to become more aware of issues such as, for example, the contribution made to the total school curriculum by music, art, and other arts subjects.

One administrator at the Department of Education (S3) suggested that it is important to encourage parents to become participants in what is happening within the school. An education consultant, now retired after twenty-five years (S6), stressed the need to promote curriculum talks and

dialogue concerning educational issues. An elementary teacher (S7) pointed out that educators must involve parents in the activities of the school and enlist their support for school programs.

The notion that the public and other stakeholders can have considerable influence upon the content of school curriculum was expressed by many of the interviewees (S3, S9, S1, and S6). These participants felt that what is perceived by parents as valuable in the education of their children is more likely to receive adequate treatment in curriculum.

That there exists a problem of public attitudes and perceptions about the place of arts in education has been addressed by Gantly (1989). He points out that public perceptions about the nature and purpose of arts in education in schools will inevitably determine the extent of commitment to arts education as a priority of curriculum. He also argues that "professionals" involved in arts education must inform the public about what is done in schools, and more importantly, why it is done. Gantly insists that arts educators must become involved in the effort to build public awareness. He makes the point that if the arts are regarded by the public as a waste of time and money, then educators cannot expect to succeed in attempts to provide quality programs in schools. Gantly's argument is especially reminiscent of the comment made by an administrator at the Department of Education (S3).

This educator pointed out that the future of the arts in schools is dependent upon education of the public and of educators by "those who know".

Theme III

Balance of Curriculum Subjects

A school board program coordinator (S1) pointed out that the issue of balance may be an important consideration with respect to decisions regarding the value of school subjects. As she reflected:

We need to look at a balanced education and we have to look at what we want our children to have in determining that criteria. We have to look at the physical ... at the affective ... the intellectual ... but we also have to recognize that there is this integration that is going to affect them all.

This interviewee depicted the balanced curriculum as crucial in producing the expected outcome of a "well-rounded" or quality education, and pointed to the importance of a varied and balanced curriculum in contributing to the fullest development of individual talents and abilities.

One elementary teacher (S5) felt that "variety and balance" are important considerations in deciding the content of school curriculum. S6, a former education consultant with the Department of Education, answered "... the prime criteria is the development of persons in all their capacities" and

pointed out that this is not possible without a rich and varied curriculum, one which provides for the academic, moral, spiritual, social, affective and physical components.

The issue of the need for balance in school curriculum has been addressed by Dearden (1984), Lawton (1987), and Eisner (1985). As discussed earlier in this document, they argue that the arts are an essential component of a relevant and balanced school curriculum.

Category D: Implications for Arts in School Curriculum

The interview subjects were asked to comment upon the implications, if any, of reduction or deletion of arts programs in the total school curriculum. Once again, the respondents generated a comprehensive list. Overall, the participants identified a considerable number of implications relating to the reduction of arts in curriculum. These include: school culture; sense of school community; student motivation; ties with community at large; appreciation for music, drama, and the arts; effective teaching; resource-based learning; personal development; education of feeling and sensitivity; access to important knowledge; and total or well-rounded education.

From the information provided by the participants in Category D: Implications for Arts in School Curriculum, a number of themes emerged. These themes are employed in presenting and analysing the data:

- I. The School Environment
- II. Teaching and Learning
- III. Total Education
- IV. Future of the Arts

Theme I

The School Environment

The most common point of agreement among the interviewees with respect to the implications for arts in curriculum pointed to effects upon school environment. Eight of the nine participants alluded to an adverse effect upon the total school environment in the event of reduction or deletion of arts programs. Several respondents referred to the arts as synonymous with the 'life' (S1, S6) of the school or the 'cement' of the school community (S9). In their view, eliminating the arts would be equal to taking away the life of the school. S8, a senior high teacher, contended that the school climate would

be so adversely affected by the exclusion of the arts that it would cause some students to drop out of school.

One elementary teacher (S5), explaining that it was a very difficult task for her to envision the school without arts programs, painted a dismal picture of the elementary school without arts - "... a totally different place ... not a place students [or teachers] would be happy to go to every morning". She spoke of school spirit; a sense of personal satisfaction that students gain from working together, such as in a school performance or assembly; of a sense of pride in one's school and similar experiences, the loss of which would "certainly [cause] a big hole in the school".

The idea that "school is life" (S6, S1) or that school presents and deals with the experiences of life (S1) again stimulated discussion about the positive effects of the arts in promoting richness, sensitivity, happiness, and sharing within a school community. It was felt that without these components, the school environment would become lifeless, "sterile"; that school culture would be non-existent. The notion of the arts as basic to life, and in so being, basic to school curriculum was a major tenet in the personal philosophy of these participants.

As Unsworth (1990) has pointed out, arts subjects provide a means for all students to develop multiple capacities which help them to make sense of

the world. Furthermore, she argues that the arts offer many opportunities for immediate success, for developing personal relationships, and self-expression.

Robinson (1991) posits that children not only need to have ideas about the world but "to act in it". He points out that the arts are closely connected with the exploration of values. In his view, arts educate feeling and promote awareness of social values. Robinson suggests that involvement in the arts can lead to a wide range of abilities and skills "with wide application and value".

Theme II

Total Education

It is interesting to note that the notion of total education of the individual has been identified as pertinent to the issue of the role of arts in curriculum, the question of what constitutes quality education, the criterion for deciding the value of school subjects and to implications for arts in education. This has been a topic raised in all four major categories of the study and which has permeated our discussions. It would appear that the notion of total education is closely linked with quality education and with the educational philosophy expressed by the participants in the study. In

particular, we are reminded of the comments of a high level administrator at the Department of Education (S4) who spoke about the "essence" of education in terms of total development of the individual; of a school board program coordinator (S1) who articulated a similar philosophy; and of a curriculum consultant of twenty-five years with the Department of Education (S6) who argued that education is more than the intellect ... a person is more than intellect, education is the formation of the total human person.

That certain areas of personal development would be in jeopardy if arts were deleted from curriculum was the perception of several of the interviewees (S1, S4, S6, and S7). Discussion of this question touched upon the notion that you cannot develop the human person without the arts (S4); that education which neglects to educate feeling and sensitivity has failed (S7).

The perception that an individual should have access to a well-rounded education, that is, an education complete and entire, with all its integral parts, was a common thread throughout the course of the interviews. It may be timely to point out that of the nine participants in the study, all perceived the arts to be an essential component of curriculum. They perhaps differed in their reasons for perceiving the arts in this fashion, but there was total agreement that the arts are integral to the total school curriculum.

In the overall responses to the question concerning implications for the arts, there was a general consensus of opinion that school curriculum without the arts would represent "merely a skeleton" of education (S6). One administrator at the Department of Education (S3) mentioned that a curriculum without the arts would result in a "narrow and restricted education"; an education consultant, now retired after twenty-five years (S6), proposed that the possibility of acquiring a well-rounded education would cease to exist if arts were to be extracted from the total curriculum. S7 pointed out that "... without arts, education is incomplete". That the arts embody a unique category of knowledge was discussed by S5. This elementary teacher spoke of the value of this knowledge in the education of children and of its certain loss in the event that arts programs are deleted from school curriculum.

This issue has been addressed and discussed earlier in Greene (1988), Kiester (1985), Robinson (1991), Unsworth (1990), Eisner (1985) and others. Significantly, it would appear that there is a particular emphasis upon the role of arts in the education of the total individual in evidence in the perceptions of the participants, but one also finds considerable emphasis upon this point in the literature as well.

Theme III

Implications for Teaching and Learning

Several of the respondents talked about a symbiotic relationship between effective teaching and the arts. One school vice-principal (S2) perceived the arts, particularly drama, art and music, as a component of effective teaching in the primary classroom. She explained how, at this level of schooling, concepts are taught and reinforced through role playing and "acting out", through poetry and music, and through art in day-to-day classroom experiences.

One high school vice-principal (S8) noted the relationship and importance of the arts to the whole concept of resource-based learning. She expressed the belief that resource-based learning would cease to function without the input and contribution of the arts.

In the view of S8 and S9, high school teachers, the role played by arts programs in providing motivation for some students is a significant one. They suggested that music and drama programs provide an arena for involvement, personal achievement and self-satisfaction for those students whose interests lie in the arts. It was further suggested that to take these

programs from school curriculum would equate, at the high school level, with a certain percentage of students dropping out of education.

As pointed out by Eisner (1985), Gardner (1985), Arnheim (1982) and others, arts activities are cognitive activities, systematized ways of knowing, thinking, and perceiving. They have shown that certain cognitive processes are directly related to the arts.

Theme IV

The Future of Arts in Curriculum

One administrator at the Department of Education (S3), described the present status of the arts as having "received a battery from the general population". He expressed a concern that there must be a clear delineation of outcomes for arts education and that parents and the general public must be made aware of the contribution and value of the arts in the school curriculum. He explained:

Even though math, science and technology seem to be the [subjects] that are voiced as those which will save [society] from the economic doldrums that we're in ...if you look at the employability skills [coming from] the Conference Board of Canada, you would realize ... the emphasis in business ... what is [expected] from students ... [coming] from the education system into business ... [is] communication skills, problem-solving skills, ability to work with others. Now, if you view

things from this perspective, you ... look and say 'Which subject areas in the curriculum contribute to that which is prized right now by society?'

The participant argued that the public and other stakeholders in education need to become aware of the contribution and value of all areas of school curriculum, "be it arts or any other area". He further explained:

[With respect to curriculum] we will have to articulate the roles that [the arts and other subject areas] can play in achieving the overall goals that are required by society for employability and post-secondary education which will lead to improving Newfoundland and the country from a competitive perspective.

S3 felt that the general population and those who are non-arts educators would not have a true appreciation for the role that arts can play "any more than someone who is not trained in the sciences can articulate the value of science". Finally, this educator predicted that whether or not the arts will withstand the period we are in right now will, to a considerable degree, depend upon how the contribution of arts in the curriculum is portrayed by "those who know".

A high level administrator at the Department of Education (S4), commented that in view of the questions posed during the interview, that there may be a perception within the education community "that somehow or another, the sciences are the new priorities".

That somehow ... as we reshape, it is science, mathematics, technology that is getting the glamour; that the resourcing and traditional definition of the arts, namely music, theatre, drama, will go by the wayside. That's not in my thinking, nor is it in the thinking of this department. But I tell you this, far more attention than in the past must be placed on science, mathematics, technology. Far more attention than in the past might be placed on music and literature because we've been underperforming.

This participant spoke of the present emphasis placed on science and technology by those from outside the education community, from those within education, and by the recent Royal Commission (1992). The participant explained the focus upon science:

Indeed we did [focus upon science] simply to give a much greater priority than is presently given to the teaching of it. That does not mean you elevate [science] in the status of subjects to teach. I would try to put priorities around everything I deem to be core. What I deem to be core would be those aspects of programs which would bring one to become a functionally literate young person. That is one who can master the language, who is conversant with being a productive member of society, who has moved to developed abilities and who is a cooperative, sharing, participating, contributing member of society. ... When I see a curriculum it automatically implies that just as ... science must be there, so too must the arts.

As discussed in Kiester (1985), the next century will demand the formation of a "new kind of human being", one who will be able to cope with the growth of knowledge, advances in technology, and rapid change in the

world. She suggests that in educating students for the future, both the sciences and the arts play a complementary role. Robinson (1991), builds a strong case for the education of students in the arts, arguing that the arts have fundamental roles in meeting the challenges of education. Furthermore, he points out that it is essential to create a balance between the arts and other key areas of the school curriculum, including science, arguing that a curriculum which neglects the arts is based upon a restricted view of intelligence.

Summary

It would appear that there is considerable argument for the value and relevance of arts subjects in school curriculum. Without exception, all of the educators who participated in the study portrayed the arts as a valuable component of curriculum and as an essential component in the total education of the individual. Many of the participants could not envision an effective curriculum without the inclusion of arts. As one administrator at the Department of Education pointed out, a major consequence of losing arts from curriculum would be a very narrow and restrictive education for students.

The school without arts was described as a sterile environment wherein both teaching and learning would suffer dire consequences. The participants described the arts as relating to the creative components of life (S1); as the more creative aspects of curriculum (S2); as the life or heart of the curriculum (S6), (S9). It is particularly interesting to recall the comment of one high level administrator at the Department of Education who spoke of the arts as "... in keeping with the essence of education ... you cannot think of the exclusion of something that is so essential...".

It would appear that the arts have received, at least from these educators, an overwhelming vote of confidence.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents conclusions and recommendations which have been generated from the information obtained in the study. The perceptions of the educators who participated in the study, information obtained from pertinent educational documents, and relevant literature pertaining to the role of arts in education provide the basis for the formulation of these conclusions and recommendations. Also contained in this chapter are suggestions for further research.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The current revision and restructuring of the educational system in Newfoundland and Labrador, premised upon improving the quality of education, places the school curriculum at its focus. The subject areas which presently comprise the curriculum will be revised and restructured based upon the perceived value of those subject areas to the overall education of students. The question of value, which has been researched by Dearden (1984) and

outlined in Chapter Two, is a controversial and difficult issue, but nonetheless, a crucial one. Fundamental questions arise such as 'What constitutes quality education?', 'What knowledge is of most worth?' and 'On what basis and by whom should these decisions be made? These types of potentially problematic questions must be adequately addressed by all those engaged in educational change.

One of the main tenets of *Towards an Achieving Society*, the final report of the Task Force on Mathematics and Science Education (1989), i.e., that not all school subjects are of equal value, points to the hierarchical approach towards curriculum that presently exists in our school system. One of the stated assumptions which guided the work *Our Children Our Future*, the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Delivery of Programs and Services in Primary, Elementary, Secondary Education (1992) was that some school courses are more important than others (p.299). That certain areas i.e., mathematics, language and science must take precedence over other subjects deemed less valuable was one of the premises which, in the words of the Commission, helped to define the inquiry and shape its recommendations. In light of this presumption, it would appear that from the outset of this inquiry, the arts subjects had already been marginalized, their place in school curriculum already preassigned.

Arts subjects, as Ross (1984) has suggested, are among the first to be eliminated when school resources are depleted because the arts are perceived as less practical than other more pragmatic concerns of curriculum. As Eisner (1992) has pointed out, such basic unquestioned assumptions about arts account for their uncertain status in school curriculum. Eisner has argued further that arts subjects are perceived as a lesser priority because of certain basic misconceptions about mind, knowledge and intelligence. It would appear that, as Robinson (1991) has posited, the nature of the problem facing arts in school curriculum is an ideological one.

Careful analysis of educational reports indicates a general lack of information with respect to the arts. When the arts subjects are mentioned, they are often referred to in general or vague terms or they are simply mentioned in a passing fashion. What is striking is that because of this lack of attention or reference to the arts, we are left to make only our own assumptions about the potential role of arts in education. Some educators, administrators, parents, and the public may, indeed, logically assume that arts subjects are not important or relevant to quality education at all. The Royal Commission on Education (1992), provides a comprehensive report which thoroughly examines all aspects of education in the Province. With respect to arts subjects, however, only cursory mention is to be found in this very

important document. Of the two-hundred and eleven recommendations made by the Commission, none make mention of the arts. The position of this Royal Commission as to the future direction of arts subjects in school curriculum is unstated. As Ross (1984) has suggested, this kind of lack of enthusiasm for the arts at the level of policy-making is indicative of the assignment of non-essential status to arts subjects.

Without exception, all educational reports analyzed as part of this study were in agreement with the notion that the fundamental goal of education must be to help each student to achieve his or her fullest development as a person, and as a member of society. These reports referenced the Aims of Public Education for Newfoundland and Labrador (1984) which provides clearly stated goals for each child's fullest development - cognitively, physically, morally, socially, and emotionally. There is no conclusive statement to be found in any of these reports and documents, however, as to the contribution of arts subjects in reaching these goals.

The participants in the study, in discussing their perceptions of quality education, were in agreement with the premise expressed by all educational reports examined, i.e., that school curriculum must be intentionally directed to the fullest growth and development of each individual student. It is interesting to note however, one of the most significant findings with respect

to the data provided by the participants was that, without exception, all of these educators expressed the view that arts subjects are vitally important in achieving this fundamental goal. Furthermore, participants placed considerable importance upon the idea that education is a process of preparation for life, not only for working life, but for personal life as well. The comments of the participants indicated that personal development was perceived to be at least as important, if not more important in some respects, than job preparation. There was wide agreement that the school curriculum must emphasize skills, values, and knowledge which address both of these important concerns. Again, and without exception, all participants perceived the arts subjects to be an essential component in the student's overall development.

Arts subjects were perceived as essential in several respects. Among the interview group, perhaps the most commonly expressed view of the contribution of arts subjects was that the arts provide experiences which make a valuable and essential contribution to the total education of the student. There was also agreement that arts subjects create a positive school environment, facilitating both the learning and teaching process; the arts enhance creativity as well as basic skills in reading, writing, communicating, and problem-solving; and, the arts play an important role in personal

development, in building self-esteem and fostering positive attitudes towards self and school.

As Unsworth (1990) pointed out, lack of self-esteem has been shown to be one of the major reasons for failure in school. Two high school educators who participated in the study (S8 and S9) both spoke of how arts programs, namely, music and drama, play a role in motivating and maintaining student interest at the high school level. Both participants expressed the idea that arts subjects are as important to a percentage of the population of any school as is math or science for some others. These high school teachers gave specific accounts of students whose interest was sparked by arts programs and who continued to attend school based upon their success in these areas. In the perception of these educators, arts programs "definitely" keep some students from dropping out of school. It was also pointed out that involvement in arts activities may also influence the behaviour of some students. As one elementary teacher (S5) recounted, even those students who had difficulty with maintaining appropriate behaviour in class often displayed a positive attitude towards their work and were well-behaved while taking part in arts-related activities. It would appear that arts education, as perceived by this group of educators, is not only a valuable and essential component of school curriculum, but also a powerful one.

Unsworth (1990) has suggested also that the arts provide a way for all students to develop multiple capacities which will help them to decipher the world, develop personal relations, and acquire appropriate forms of self-expression - all basic requirements for tapping at-risk students. The report of the Royal Commission (1992) pointed out that today's classrooms are frequently disrupted by students who are bored, unmotivated or have poor attitudes towards school (p.329). The Commission also stated that a means to address the needs of these students must be found. It would appear that some of these means may lie in the area of arts education.

Another point of broad agreement among the cross-section of educators who participated was that quality education, that is, total education of the individual in relation to abilities, talents, and intelligences, cannot be provided without inclusion of the arts. It was agreed that, in providing an education of quality, schools must offer a broad range of learning opportunities for students, which include the arts. Once again, the arts subjects were described as both basic and essential by a majority of the participants. Many educators in the study had difficulty envisioning the school curriculum without the arts. This may be indicative of how integral a role the arts play in terms of the total curriculum. As one primary teacher (S2) noted, even if the arts were deleted on paper, they would still take place in

classrooms. A high school principal (S9) claimed, drama is as useful in physics as it is in English. The participants' comments indicated a high level of agreement that through arts experiences students learn to work together, build better communication skills, become more creative, and make decisions.

As mentioned earlier, in light of the fact that the Royal Commission (1992) made only cursory mention of the arts subjects, the assumption could be made that these subjects may not have relevancy to the basic premise of quality education. However, as this study has shown, educators perceive the arts as having an important and essential role in providing quality education for students at all levels of the education system.

It was noted by several of the participants, that if the arts were deleted from the school curriculum, schools would be, without question, negatively affected. They felt certain that school would become a very different place, as one elementary teacher (S5) pointed out, not a place where students would want to go every morning. One curriculum consultant at the Department of Education, now retired after twenty-five years (S6), expressed the view that without the arts, education would be a "disaster".

The idea that creating and maintaining an appropriate balance in curriculum emerged as a significant concern for many of the educators who participated in the study. It was suggested that the arts and other subjects in

the school curriculum complement each other, and that an appropriate and relevant balance between the arts and sciences would best serve the needs of students (S1, S4, S5, S7, S8, and S9). It would appear that this particular notion is contradictory to the present "back-to-basics" idea, an approach which would emphasize certain aspects of curriculum, particularly mathematics, science and technology. This approach has been favoured by the Task Force on Education (1989) and is also in evidence in the recent Royal Commission (1992). It has been suggested that the "back-to-basics" approach which has been the subject of much debate by parents, educators and the public, is not appropriate for today's educational world (Eisner (1992), Kiester (1985)). As Robinson (1991) has pointed out, looking towards the world of the future, education must recognize the diversity and complexity of students' abilities, build students' self-confidence and self-esteem, spark their interests, and equip them with the skills they need to face a future which will present many challenges and uncertainties.

As Rose (1993) has pointed out, the arts provide a proven site for nurturing characteristics vital for the successful participation of individuals in our present and future society. These characteristics include: the ability to communicate, to think critically, to conceptualize and problem-solve; to develop moral and social awareness, positive attitudes and values; to acquire

knowledge, language and culture; and to become adaptable to change. These are the very characteristics which have been identified by the final report of the Royal Commission (1992), *Our Children Our Future*, as well as other educational reports, as essential to the future success of students.

Finally, this study has illuminated a potentially significant discrepancy between the perceptions of educators towards the arts in curriculum and the future of arts programs in our schools. Without exception, all educators who participated in this study portrayed the arts as valuable and relevant, as an essential component in the total education of the individual. It is ironic, given this premise, that arts programs appear to be facing, as has historically been their plight, the spectre of reduction and elimination from school curriculum. If indeed the arts are the "life" and "heart" of school curriculum (S6, S9), why then are the arts given secondary consideration as was shown earlier with respect to current educational documents? If the arts are valuable and essential as indicated by the research data and recent literature as discussed in Chapter Two, why does this phenomenon continue to exist? Do educators have a voice in curriculum decision-making, and if so, is this voice being heard? Who or what is influencing those empowered to make these important decisions?

The future of arts programs in the current climate of educational reform in Newfoundland and Labrador is, at best, uncertain, and possibly at risk. Educators have expressed the view, however, that the arts contribute in a significant way to the outcomes of quality education. Educators have pointed out that the arts are not a luxury - they are a necessity in schools. Silent support for the arts, however, will not suffice. If arts programs are to remain vital and vibrant in the curriculum of our schools, sentiments such as these must not only be voiced and heard, but also acted upon by those who have the power to initiate change.

Suggestions for Further Study

There are some important questions which have emerged as a result of examination of the research problem. While the study achieved its proposed goal, to provide insight into the perceptions of educators towards the arts in school curriculum, there are important issues which have come to light and which bear further consideration.

One area of the problem which has not been addressed in this study and which has been shown to be important is public perceptions of the arts in education. An understanding of what perceptions are held by the general

public would certainly help educators and administrators to gain a new and perhaps better perspective of the problem, and consequently, enable those who are in positions which involve such policy-making, to make more informed decisions.

One of the most difficult questions in the study, was the issue of how decisions should be made with respect to the value of school subjects. It was suggested that the future of arts subjects in school curriculum would depend upon, as one administrator at the Department of Education (S3) articulated, "those who know", i.e., those who can speak for the value and contribution of arts in curriculum. Another participant (S6) noted that public curriculum dialogue must be initiated, in order to facilitate a sharing of ideas and important information among educators, administrators and public stakeholders. An important next step may be to investigate the need for such a process and how it might be implemented.

Further to this research, there is a need to look more closely at the contribution and role of arts subjects in school curriculum, at all levels of the system, through examination of what is actually taking place in the classrooms of schools in this province. There is a need to examine what is happening, not only with respect to formal programs, but what is taking place informally, i.e., as extra or co-curricular activities. In order to move towards a truly

comprehensive understanding of how the arts are "lived" in today's school system, there is a need for dialogue with educators who are directly involved in delivery of programs, discussions with students who participate in arts activities, and close examination of the expected and real outcomes of arts programs.

Research of this nature will define and validate further the place of arts in school curriculum in Newfoundland and Labrador. Such investigations will better enable 'those who know' to articulate the value and role of arts education to those who need to know. Furthermore, in recognizing these voices, such research will help to engage and empower all participants in the educational process.

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Appendix A

Participants in Study

Subject 1	Present position:	School board program coordinator of music, art, drama, and physical education
	Past experience:	Music teacher all levels Music major area
Subject 2	Present position:	Vice-principal
	Past experience:	Primary teacher - 15 years
Subject 3	Present position:	Administrator, Department of Education
	Past experience:	Assistant Superintendent Classroom teacher all levels Science major area
Subject 4	Present position:	Administrator, Department of Education
	Past experience:	University Professor School principal
Subject 5	Present position:	Elementary teacher - 30 years
Subject 6	Past experience:	Curriculum consultant, Department of Education (now retired after 25 years in that position)
Subject 7	Past experience:	Teacher, 30 years (retired) School principal and classroom teacher
Subject 8	Present position:	Vice-principal
	Past experience:	Senior high teacher - 6 years Science major area
Subject 9	Present position:	School principal - 15 years
	Past experience:	High school teacher - 22 years Mathematics major area

Appendix B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What does the term "the arts" mean to you?
2. What is the role of arts in school curriculum?
3. How important, in your view, are the arts relative to other aspects of school curriculum?
4. What is your definition of quality education? Are the arts an essential component of quality education? Why or why not?
5. Are the arts in any respect "basic" to school curriculum?
6. What sort of criteria should serve as a basis for deciding the relative value of subjects in school curriculum?
7. What are the implications, if any, of deletion or reduction of arts programs in the total school curriculum?
8. Can the arts contribute to school culture? If so, how?



